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This collection of articles discusses social dialects, the problems that dialects cause the disadvantaged, and how these problems can be overcome in curriculum planning and classroom practice. Articles are (1) "English New Dimensions and New Demands" by Muriel Crosby, (2) "A Checklist of Significant Features for Discriminating Social Dialects" by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., (3) "Poverty, Early Language Deprivation, and Learning Ability" by F. Elizabeth Metz, (4) "A Head Start in Language" by Rose Mukerji and Helen F. Robison, (5) "Understanding the Language of the Culturally Disadvantaged Child" by Eddie G. Ponder, (6) "Vocabulary Deprivation of the Underprivileged Child" by Edgar Dale, (7) "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension" by Kenneth S. Goodman, (8) "Using Poetry to Help Educationally Deprived Children Learn Inductively" by June Byers, (9) "Talk Written Down" by Lila Sheppard, (10) "Teaching Language and Reading to Disadvantaged Negro Children" by Allison Davis, (11) "Teaching English to Indian Children" by Hildegard Thompson, and (12) "Annotated Bibliography of Books for Elementary Children in English and Foreign Language Editions" by Eldonna L. Evertts. (DL)

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# Dimensions of Dialect

Eldonna L. Evertts, Editor

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# Introduction

During recent years interest and concern for helping disadvantaged children have gained momentum.The report of the NCTE Task Force, *Language Programs for the Disadvantaged,* stressed the need to keep the teaching profession informed of theoretical principles of language development and social dialectology along with translations of these principles into practice. Studying the nature of language and its acquisition must lead to analysis of classroom encounters with language. Subsequently, the teaching techniques developed will assist disadvantaged children in achieving social and academic success commensurate with their potential. This pamphlet serves as one point of departure toward meeting the challenge of helping the disadvantaged find acceptance and satisfaction through greater range and flexibility in the use of language. It is hoped that scholarly and applied research during the next decade will present many more avenues for accepting this challenge.

This publication has its roots in the insight, visions, and research of school administrators, teachers, and scholars. Most of these articles first appeared in *Elementary English,* but two are published here for the first time. All articles are pertinent to the problems in working effectively with the disadvantaged; each author, however, presents a personal view of the problems and solutions.

The first article, "New Dimensions and New Demands," by Muriel Crosby, focuses upon the issues involved in teaching the disadvantaged. The child's image of himself, because of his nonstandard English dialect, and his difficulty in communicating with his teachers, stand out as keys to understanding the situation.

The second article, while not attempting to be "definitive," presents clearly and concisely significant features of language which are social in origin. "A Checklist of Significant Features for Discriminating Social Dialects," by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., includes for the first time the phonological aspects of subcultural dialects for native speakers as well as structural features which are socially diagnostic everywhere. Other features of language virtually indigenous to one region of the country might seem objectionable to speakers from other regions and would be objectionable in written expository prose anywhere. Here, however, the concern is for features which are social in origin and which are regarded as socially diagnostic everywhere. It is those social features which are structural in nature and which, consequently, lend themselves best to "pattern" drills.

Other articles discuss basic knowledge for the teacher of the disadvantaged and a program for the teacher's own language improvement, the manner in which language deprivation can affect learning, ways of providing a well-planned preschool program, and an attempt to change the language of the disadvantaged child. Articles on vocabulary development and reading bring special attention to the teacher and the teaching process. Elementary teachers, especially those teaching the disadvantaged, will find the article "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension" helpful in curriculum planning.

A case study of how one teacher used poetry and choral reading to help Mexican children achieve specific language objectives is included. The concluding articles, by Lila Sheppard, Allison Davis, and Hildegard Thompson, discuss the problems and techniques for teaching language, reading, and English to specific groups—Maoris, Negroes, and Indians. Although these articles are concerned with distinctive groups, many of the ideas have a wider application.

A bibliography of books for the elementary child which are written in English and a foreign language concludes the pamphlet.

The articles in this pamphlet illustrate several dimensions of dialect: regional, social, national, ethnic. How important, then, for the elementary teacher to go beyond regarding language as merely a phenomenon of social class. The language of the native speaker of English will reflect not only the cultural background under which he acquired his first language, but also the region in which he lived. To this must be added later experiences with language, such as travel, living in various areas, the learning of another language, general interest in language—both its pronunciation patterns and vocabulary. Moreover, a person who has learned English as a second language may demonstrate in his use of English features of his native language. All individuals, consequently, speak a dialect, and how delightful it is that language can be individual.

Certainly there need be no concentrated effort to demand that all persons speak alike. Differences in language can be recognized and appreciated. It is not derogatory that a person's idiolect reflects his personal background. When, however, a pupil uses a variety of language which places economic, social, or academic limitations upon him, the teacher should help this pupil gain access to another more generally accepted dialect—without expecting him to abandon his former patterns, as there will be times when these patterns will serve him well. Much work remains to be done in dialect research, and as new studies are completed there will also be new applications in the elementary classroom. This pamphlet attempts to focus on some of the dimensions of dialect already investigated, with implications already tested out as they have been applied in the schools.

Eldonna L. Evertts

**Muriel Crosby**

# English: New Dimensions and New Demands

In the beginning, there was the land, stretching in majesty from ocean to ocean. The land was rich in its diversity—of mountains and valleys, of deserts and grassy plains, of singing brooks and rushing, mighty rivers, of plant and animal life.

Beneath the surface of the land, greater riches were hidden—life-giving water, fuel to fire man's industries, ore to build his cities of steel in a far distant time.

And there were no people. The land was virgin; prostitution of the land was in the unknown future.

Eons of time passed and the people came. Crossing the Bering Strait, the first people took possession of the land. The land remained in all its beauty, its riches untapped, for these first people were not exploiters of the land. They used only what was needed to sustain life and to create their culture. Man and the land were one.

Other eons of time passed, and other men took possession of the land. These men came from many countries, driven by many purposes. There were the adventurer and the despoiler, the marauder and the idealist, the desperate and the weary, the seeker of the dream and the builder of empire. Only the Negro came against his will. Yet all men, whatever their reasons for being of the land, were bound together by a single quality—all possessed the will to survive in an unknown, often hostile, environment.

In the brief period of recorded history, a great nation has been created by those who sought the land and made it theirs. In this short span of time, a great political philosophy has been established, rooted in the Hebraic-Christian ethic of the brotherhood of man. Implementing this philosophy has been the greatest challenge faced by the people of the United States, for from the beginning, those who held the land rejected the stranger. In *Western Star*,[1] Benet takes us back to the establishment of the first English colony in Virginia, in the seventeenth century. Describing the landing of this first group of settlers, Benet writes:

> They landed and explored.
> It was the first flood of Virginia Spring,
> White with new dogwood, smelling of wild
> strawberries.

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Dr. Crosby is Assistant Superintendent of the Wilmington, Delaware, Public Schools and was President of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1966. This address was presented at the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention in Boston, 1965 and was published in *Elementary English* XLIII (April 1966), 327-332.

[1] Stephen Vincent Benet, *Western Star*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1943, pp. 50-51. Copyright, 1943, by Rosemary Carr Benet. Reprinted by permission of Brandt and Brandt.

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Warm and soft-voiced, cornflower-skied and kind.
And they were ravished with it, after the sea.

And that very evening,
As they were going back to the anchored ships,
The savages came down from the hills,
Creeping like bears through the grass, with bows in their mouths,
And the sudden arrows flew in the goodly wood,
The first ambush, the first taste of Indian war.
The balmy night, the strange country, the shot arrows,
And it was not a dream.

As the rushing tide of men from the old countries, who heard of the western star, came to take possession of the land, each in turn was rebuffed and fought for his place on the land.

Massachusetts begins, and Providence Plantations,
Connecticut begins, Virginia spreads out.
There are Swedes by the Delaware, Scotchmen after Dunbar,
They whip the first Quaker bloodily through the street.[2]

Throughout the centuries of exploration of the western continent, the establishment of a nation, and the assimilation of endless floods of immigrants, man's inhumanity to man became the first great obstacle to overcome.

And Benet reminds us that as we look to the past to sight new directions for the future, we must

Remember the name of the outcast and the stranger,
Remember that when you say
"I will have none of this exile and this stranger
For his face is not like my face and his speech is strange."
You have denied America with that word
Though your fathers were the first to settle the land.[3]

Today, we are faced with a new challenge in the establishment of the Hebraic-Christian ethic, a challenge not presented by a new wave of immigrants, but by those who have lived long on the land as strangers in our midst. The minorities of our nation are not strangers by their own choosing. They have been kept outside the pale of a white world by those who cherish the American dream for themselves, but not for others. This challenge was brought into focus by the United States Supreme Court's Decision on the Desegregation of Public Schools in 1954. The Decision, at one and the same time, recognized the role of education in bringing to fruition the American dream, and placed upon the public schools of the nation the responsibility for becoming instruments of social change.

Teachers of English who would meet their responsibility as participants in a great social revolution have an exciting adventure ahead.

## *Teachers of English as Participants in the Social Revolution of the Twentieth Century*

Never before in the history of education in the United States has there been such widespread recognition of the vital significance of education as a force in the welfare of our nation. Federal legislation supporting education through huge grants of money, financial support of education by numerous private foundations, are ample evidence of interest and concern.

Leading all the educational problems which must be met is the current effort to educate America's millions of disadvantaged people. The National Council of Teachers of English reflects its leadership responsibility through its most recent contribution, *Language Programs for the Disadvantaged,* totally supported through Council funds. Recognizing the need to determine the progress of English language teaching and learning in the hundreds of special projects in universities and public school systems across the nation, the Executive Committee created a National Task Force of some 25 Council leaders to visit projects for the disadvantaged on all educational levels, to visit "inner cities" of the North and "outer" rural areas of the West and South to analyze findings and their implications for English language teaching, and to prepare a report to the profession on promising practices and the needed leadership role for NCTE.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

Educators who have been engaged in discovering the special educational problems of the disadvantaged have identified major blocks to learning for those who are called "the disadvantaged." These blocks to learning are common among the disadvantaged, the Indian child on the reservation, the Mexican-American child of the southwest, the Negro child confined to the blighting ghettos of the great cities, the poor white child living on the fringes of a "white world" no longer a reality, except for those who look backward. And all of the blocks to learning are centered in language, directly or indirectly. Because they are, teachers of English have a prime commitment to help the disadvantaged grow in command of their native language.

*Self-Image.* The child of deprivation learns early in life that he is worth little and will never become anything. What five years of living have taught many of these children is well expressed by a kindergartner, who, in attempting to define a wish, explained, "It is something you want very bad and know you'll never get." Each year of life simply confirms this hopelessness and we find the teenager, sated with failure, waiting hopefully for his sixteenth birthday, to be released from school, which has become unbearable. One drop-out spoke eloquently for his peers when, upon meeting a former principal upon the street as he went to pick up a date, he was chided gently on his garish costume, with the comment, "I wouldn't let you visit my daughter looking like this." The lad then exclaimed "Why, I could never visit your daughter; I'm low-class Negro!" No child or youth in our country, at the age of five or sixteen, should be set in a bind in which his own inner convictions have been so shaped that there is no hope for release.

If a child's out-of-school life has produced passivity and hopelessness, the only answer is to be found in the schools. Studies of the disadvantaged are in common agreement that the most crucial factor in stimulating the motivation of deprived children for academic learning, in developing the will to aspire, in discovering for themselves the great adventure of learning, is the *attitude of the teacher.* Teachers who look at their changing school neighborhoods, who look upon children and youth who seem to be different from others they have known, and condemn them with the comment, "*These* children are changing *our* schools," denigrate our profession, and fail in moral commitment to all children.

***For teachers of English, the first requisite is a belief in the value of the children they teach, as human beings, worthy of respect and capable of learning.***

*Cause and Effect Relationships.* Notable among the inadequacies of the disadvantaged is the inability to generalize, to see cause and effect relationships. I first became alerted to this when most of the children in Wilmington's project[4] responded to the question, "What would you like to change about the adults you know?" with some version of "The cranky guy next door who yells at you." Children from middle-income groups inevitably added a "but" to their responses, *e.g.*, "but he likes a nice yard." Seldom did a disadvantaged child reveal that he saw a reason for the adult's behavior. Pursuing this matter further, we found that social workers, attempting to help mothers plan the spending of a weekly food budget so that the family would have something to eat each day, discovered that the small funds would be spent for a bit of luxury during the early part of the week, with nothing to eat during the remainder. The mothers revealed inability to postpone immediate satisfactions, to look ahead. And, again, we found the same recurrence of evidence of failure to see cause and effect relationships when a young junior high school principal, planning a tea in June for mothers of incoming seventh graders the following fall, reported that the mothers had not attended. The elementary principal explained that the mothers knew the children were being promoted. Hence, there were no problems. "If you have the meeting six weeks after school has opened, the mothers will attend. You see, my mothers do not anticipate problems." And sure enough, the mothers turned out en masse the following October.

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[4] Muriel Crosby, *An Adventure in Human Relations.* Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1965.

All of us accept the theory of involving children in planning their curriculum. But far too often we have created teaching situations in which the children are manipulated and do no genuine planning with the teacher. One good teacher caught herself at this practice, when, in a session marked by a real struggle to have her sixth graders suggest problems to guide the development of a literature unit, one lad asked, "Miss Patterson, have we guessed what you want us to say yet?"

Planning is not just a skill to learn. It is a way of life. Through planning, an individual learns the value of defining a problem, considering possible courses of action based on probable outcomes, and living with the results. The family pattern of life of the disadvantaged is notably lacking in planning for the future.

*For teachers of English, the second requisite is an understanding of the need of disadvantaged children to learn in school the skills of planning and the art of practicing them. As children are involved in planning in school, they are enabled to identify with the purposes of growing in command of their language and their lives.*

*Language Power.* Inability to command informal standard English is one of the greatest handicaps to the disadvantaged. Children from deprivation usually experience one of two family language patterns. There is the inarticulate family, where little language is used. Often, "umbrella" words characterize the language of children from these families. One word may have many different meanings, *e.g.*, "mess" in some form has been discovered to have more than 50 different meanings. "He messed with me," means something negative, such as, "He said something bad about my mother"; "he pushed me around." On the other hand, many families are quite articulate in their family dialect, which may be dynamic in vocabulary, style, and structure.

In either case, the child with the nonstandard English dialect learns early that he and the teacher are not communicating. He senses disapproval and clams up. The teacher is then apt to describe all disadvantaged children as inarticulate. When this happens, the child is deprived of the use of the only verbal means of communication he has. At a period in life when interest in language is keen, the means for exploring language is cut off. Language not used is language not learned. Interest in learning informal standard English is thus retarded.

*For teachers of English, the third requisite is an appreciation of the family dialects of their children and an understanding of the need of all people to possess several dialects. The job of the English teacher is to help children develop an understanding of the appropriateness of the dialect to the situation. Family dialects are appropriate to family situations; informal standard English is necessary to obtain and hold a job, to advance academically and economically. When children and youth find use value in learning their language, motivation and achievement are greater.*

In other times, from the ranks of the disadvantaged have come those whose command of the English language has demonstrated that "language *is* power," over the minds and hearts, as well as in the politics of men. Abraham Lincoln best illustrates the fact that command of language in all of its beauty and power is not the attribute of middle-class Americans, alone.

In a moving tribute to the late Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, James Reston, of *The New York Times*, noted that: "The tragedy of Adlai Stevenson is not that the United States has lost an ambassador at the United Nations, but that the Western world has lost another of its few eloquent men. Language is power and in the last few years the West has lost most of the men who could define its purposes—Churchill and Gaitskell in Britain, Kennedy in the United States, Hammarskjöld at the United Nations, Nehru in India, not to mention those spokesmen of the Western literary world, Frost, Faulkner, and T. S. Eliot."

Reston's tribute to Stevenson clearly points to the responsibility of teachers of English to search for and develop, among all of the children and youth they teach, that potential for language power inherent in all of the classes and cultures of our society. The Hebraic-Christian ethic demands it and national survival depends upon it.

## *New Dimensions Make New Demands*

New dimensions and new demands upon teachers of English require teachers with the "new look." They require teachers who look upon children and youth with compassion and understanding, who have developed the art of empathy for the children they teach, whose own love of the English language and what it can mean to young people growing toward maturity, in an often hostile world, is communicated in such a way that learning to know and love it become irresistible. They require teachers who listen when the children speak:

### We Go to School

We find our teachers friendly or unfriendly,
Friendly for the most part.

We accept ourselves as teachers accept us.
Worthy or unworthy,
Troublesome or happy,
Able or unable,
Conforming or creative,
We see ourselves as teachers see us.

We find many children in school.
Privileged or deprived,
Gay or moody,
Accepting or rejecting,
We see ourselves as other children see us.

We learn many things in school.
We learn that people are alike,
Yet different.
We learn to trust others.
Or to distrust them.
We learn that there is a world of the imagination
And a world of reality
And that both are good.
We learn that we are the sons of our fathers,
That the world they have created
May be cherished or changed.
We learn to like school
Or to hate it.[5]

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[5] *Ibid.*

### We Are the Future

When you look at us
You see yourselves.

When you look at us
You see the heritage of many peoples,
Molded and melded into a common heritage.

When you look at us
You see the future you have shaped.

When you look at us
You see all children,
Everywhere.[6]

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[6] *Ibid.*

RAVEN I. McDAVID, JR.

# A Checklist of Significant Features for Discriminating Social Dialects[1]

As an aid to the teacher who is interested in a more efficient approach to the problem of teaching a standard variety of English—for public roles—to those who use nonstandard varieties at home, the following list of features, all of which are both systematic and significant, has been drawn up, partly from the collections of the regional linguistic atlases, partly from more intensive local studies.

The emphasis is on those features of the language that recur frequently and are therefore most amenable to pattern drills. It must not be inferred that other, less well-patterned features of English are unimportant as social markers, but only that they do not lend themselves to productive drill. Discriminating the principal parts of irregular verbs, as past tense *saw* and past participle *seen*, is a part of the linguistic behavior that constitutes standard English, but the pattern *see-saw-seen* is duplicated only by such compounds of *see* as *foresee*. On the other hand, the discrimination between *I see* and *he sees* is a part of a pattern of subject-verb concord that is faced every time a subject is used with a present tense verb.

The list is concerned with social dialects of English and does not include all the problems faced by the native speaker of some other language. For each such situation one needs special contrastive studies like those currently being published by the University of Chicago Press. Native speakers of Spanish, for instance, have special difficulties with the English consonant clusters /sp-, st-, sk-/ at the beginnings of words; native speakers of Czech or Finnish need to learn the accentual patterns of English; native speakers of continental European languages need to master the perfect phrase in such expressions of time as *I have been in Chicago for five years;* native speakers of almost every other language need to learn a finer meshed set of vowel distinctions, as between *peach* and *pitch, bait* and *bet* and *but, pool* and *pull, boat* and *bought, hot* and *hut*.

The origins of these features are of indirect concern here; that they are of social significance is what concerns us. In general, however, it is clear that most of them may be traced back to the folk speech of England, and that in the United States none of them is exclusively identified with any racial group, though in any given community some of them may be relatively more frequent among whites or among Negroes.

This list is restricted to features that occur in speech as well as in writing. It is recognized that regional varieties of English differ in the distance between standard informal speech and standard formal writing. They vary considerably in the kinds of reductions of final consonant clusters, either absolutely or when followed by a word beginning with a consonant. The plural of sixth may be /sɪks/, homonymous with the cardinal numeral; *burned a hole* may be pronounced /bə̂rnd a hól/ but *burned my pants* /bərn mài páents/. Similarly, the copula may not appear in questions as *They ready? That your boy? We going now? She been drinking?* The auxiliary *have* may not appear even as a reflex of /v/ in such statements as *I been thinking about it* or *we been telling you this*. In families where the conventions of written and printed English are learned early as a separate subsystem, differences of this kind cause little trouble but for speakers of nonstandard dialects who have little home exposure to books, these features may provide additional problems in learning to write. It is often difficult for the teacher to overcome these problems in the students' writing without fostering an unnatural pronunciation.

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[1] This list will be incorporated in a manual of social dialects being prepared by Alva L. Davis of the Illinois Institute of Technology under a grant from the U. S. Office of Education.

It should be recognized, of course, that cultural situations may change in any community. To take the southern dialectal situation, with which I am most familiar. Forty years ago there was a widespread social distinction in the allophones of /ai/. The monophthongal [a·] was used by all classes finally, as in *rye*, or before voiced consonants as in *ride;* before voiceless consonants, however, educated speakers had a diphthong and any uneducated speakers used the monophthong, so that *nice white rice* became a well-known social shibboleth.[2] In recent years, however, the shibboleth has ceased to operate, and many educated southerners now have the monophthong in all positions, and their numbers are increasing. This observation was also made last spring by James B. McMillan, of the University of Alabama, who added that in his experience the falling together of /ai/ and /a/ before /-r/, so that *fire* and *far, hired* and *hard,* become homonymous, was still restricted to nonstandard speech. Yet last August I noticed that this homonymy was common on the Dallas radio, in the formal speech of the editor of the women's hour.

It should not be assumed, furthermore, that one will not find other systematic features discriminating local dialects. Nor should we be so naive as to expect the speakers of any community to cease regarding the speech of outsiders as *ipso facto* inferior because it is different—even though these outsiders may be superior in education and social standing.

We are all ethnocentric after our own fashion; in our localities, we may consider some differences important whether they are or not—and if enough people worry about them some of these may become important. This is the traditional origin of neuroses. Meanwhile, it is probably good sense as well as good humor to recognize that though the white middle class Chicagoan often considers the loss of /r/ in *barn* and the like a lower class feature, the cultivated southerner associates the middle western /r/ in such words with the speech of poor whites—and that the distinction between *wails* and *whales* is socially diagnostic nowhere in the English speaking world. The features here are diagnostic everywhere, though not all of them occur in every situation where differences in social dialects are important.

### Pronunciation

1. The distinction between /θ/ as in *thin* and /t/ in *tin,* /f/ in *fin,* /s/ in *sin.*
2. Failure to make the similar distinction between /ð/ in *th*en and /d/, /v/, /z/.
3. Failure to make the distinction between the vowels of *bird* and *Boyd, curl* and *coil.*

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[2] This observation was made, *inter alia,* in my analyses of the pronunciation of English in the Greenville, S. C., metropolitan area, at meetings of the Linguistic Society in New York City (December 1938) and Chapel Hill, N. C. (July 1941).

A generation ago this contrast was most significant among older speakers of the New York metropolitan area. It has become less important, since few younger speakers confuse these pairs. But it still should be noted, not only for New York City but for New Orleans as well.[3]

At one time a monophthongal /ai/ in the South was standard in final position and before voiced consonants, as in *rye* and *ride*, but substandard before voiceless consonants as in *right*. This is no longer true; many educated southerners have monophthongal /ai/ in all positions and the number is increasing.

4. The omission of a weak stressed syllable preceding the primary stress, so that in substandard speech *professor* may become *fessor*, *reporter* become *porter*, and *insurance* become *shoo-ance* or *sho-unce*.
5. A statistically disproportionate front-shifting of the primary stress giving such forms as *po*-lice, *in*-surance, *ee*-ficiency and *gui*-tar, etc.

   Front-shifting is characteristic of English borrowings from other languages; in *bal*cony it is completely acceptable, in *ho*tel and *Ju*ly, acceptability is conditioned by position in the sentence.
6. Heavy stress on what is a weak stressed final syllable in standard English, giving acci*dent*, ele*ment*, presi*dent*, evi*dence*, etc.

### Inflection

Noun

7. Lack of the noun plural: Two *boy* came to see me.
8. Lack of the noun genitive: This is *Mr. Brown* hat.

Pronoun

9. Analogizing of the /-n/ of *mine* to other absolute genitives, yielding *ourn, yourn, hisn, hern, theirn.*
10. Analogizing of the compound reflexives, yielding *hisself, theirselves.*

Demonstratives

11. Substitution of *them* for *those*, as *them* books.
12. Compound demonstratives: *these-here* dogs, *them-(th)ere* cats.

Adjectives

13. Analogizing of inflected comparisons: the *wonderfullest* time, a *lovinger* child.
14. Double comparisons: a *more prettier* dress, the *most ugliest* man.

Verb

15. Unorthodox person-number concord of the present of *to be*. This may be manifest in generalizing of *am* or *is* or *are*, or in the use of *be* with all persons.
16. Unorthodox person-number concord of the past of *be*: I *were* or we *was.*
17. Failure to maintain person-number concord of the present indicative of other verbs: *I does, he do.* (This is perhaps the most clearly diagnostic feature.)

    Note that three third person singular forms of common verbs are irregular: *has, does* /dʌz/, says /sez/; in the last two the spelling conceals the irregularity, but many speakers who are learning this inflection will say /duz/ and /sez/.
18. Omission of /-ɪŋ/ of the present participle: He was *open* a can of beer.

    Note that both /ɪŋ/ and /ɪn/ may be heard in standard speech, depending on region and styles.
19. Omission of /-t, -d, -əd/ of the past

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[3] The monophthongal southern /ai/ disturbs many easterners and middle westerners. Some Philadelphians, for instance, allege that southerners confuse *ride* and *rod;* some Detroiters, that they confuse *right* and *rat.* They do not; the confusion exists in the mind of the eastern and middle western observer.

tense: *I burn a hole* in my pants yesterday.

Note that before a word beginning with a consonant the /-d/ may be omitted in speech in *I burned my* pants. Those who have this contextual loss of the sound need to learn the special conventions of writing.

20. Omission of /-t, -d, -əd/ of the past participle.

21. Omission of the verb *to be* in statements before a predicate nominative. *He a good boy.*

Note that in questions this omission may occur in standard oral English, though it would never be written in standard expository prose.

22. Omission of *to be* in statements before adjectives: *They ready.*

23. Omission of *to be* in statements before present participles: *I going* with you.

24. Omission of *to be* in statements before past participle: *The window broken.*

25. Omission of the /-s, -z, -əz/ reflex of *has* before *been* in statements: *He been drinking.*

Note that this omission may occur in questions in standard oral English, and also that in standard oral English many educated speakers may omit the /-v/ reflex of *have: I been thinking about it; we been telling you this,* though it would not be omitted in standard expository prose.

26. Substitution of *been, done,* or *done been* for *have,* especially with a third person singular subject: *He done been finished.* In other situations the /-v/ may be lost, as in #25 (the preceding situation).

F. ELIZABETH METZ

# Poverty, Early Language Deprivation, and Learning Ability

For objective consideration of children's linguistic limitations, language should be subdivided into at least three of its definable aspects:

1. Lexical—relating to words or the vocabulary of a language as distinguished from its grammar or construction.
2. Phonetic Structure—relating to spoken language or speech sounds patterned within words.
3. Syntactic Structure—relating to the way in which words are put together or patterned to form phrases, clauses, or sentences in a connected or orderly system or arrangement—i.e., *grammar*.

### *Typical Limitations in the Lexical Aspects of Language.*

The acquisition of vocabulary is dependent upon two mental processes, abstraction and symbolization. A child who calls a *ladder* a *get-up* is demonstrating inability in symbolization, or the knowledge of names or signs to stand for objects, acts, qualities, attitudes, and relationships. When a child calls a *horse* a *doggy*, he is failing in symbolization and also in abstraction, or the ability to generalize from nonidentical experiences to form concepts or classes such as *cars, fruit, animals.*

Children who have experienced early language deprivation are often baffled by a standarized measure of vocabulary such as the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

The Detroit Great Cities School Improvement Program in Language Arts (7) used a sound approach to planning vocabulary growth by first assessing the actual spoken language vocabularies of culturally deprived children who had just finished kindergarten.

Shaw (6), in discussing the language problems of culturally disadvantaged children, states, "We have built our aptitude and intelligence tests so that reading and vocabulary count very heavily, and have found them valid as predictors of academic success."

It has long been the writer's opinion that group tests of intelligence measure the young child's language deprivation. Analysis was made of the oral vocabulary required to complete successfully five different group tests of intelligence. In one, the child must understand fourteen geometric terms to comprehend the teacher's oral directions. Language-deprived children often lack the concepts of such terms; for example, *pointed, oval-shaped, opening* (noun), or *partly curved.* This same test includes more than twenty directional words and phrases, among which are *toward the left, opposite from, the next after,* and *exactly under.* How, when we know such tests are valid as predictors of academic success, can we fail to teach the language-deprived child this vocabulary?

Most group tests of intelligence include

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tasks called *nonverbal* which involve ability in abstraction or classification. The task may involve the selection of an object or design from a series because it is *different* or *not like the others.* It may require the selection of two items from a series because they are related as are no other items in the series. Such tasks involve the ability to relate or isolate items on the basis of mutiple determinants. Choice must sometimes be made on the basis of *use;* for example, isolating an *eraser* from a series of *tools for writing.* In other tasks the choice might be determined by *direction,* up or down or left and right. *Spatial* factors such as symmetric—asymmetric may be involved. Examples of still other determinants are: spatial-numerical; reality testing; series-patterning. Are these tasks really *nonverbal?* Let us compare the responses of children from adequate language environments with those of language-deprived children. On a relatively simple task such as selecting a *tiger* as different from a *pig,* a *horse,* and a *sheep,* both children will probably succeed. When the first child is told, "Tell why," he can easily explain, "Well, the pig and the sheep and the horse are all farm animals, but the tiger is a jungle animal." Many language-deprived children, on the other hand, will be unable to give a verbal explanation of their thought processes. One child responded by pointing to each farm animal saying, "Him here," then pointing to the tiger and saying, "Him not here!" Can we doubt that some quality of inner-language is being employed by a child when he performs such so-called *nonverbal* tasks? On more complicated items of a test, the language-deprived child will probably fail the task even without verbalization. Examine the inner-language needed to solve such an item as this:

> Let's see, there are four squares here. Each one is outlined by figures such as triangles, circles, stars, and squares. Two of the large squares use triangles and small squares—the other two use stars and circles . . . . no, that won't help find the one that is different. . . . Aha! Three of the large squares have the same small figure in all four corners, with two each of the second kind of small figures filling in each side. The different large square uses two different small figures and has them arranged first one kind and then the other kind, all around the large square!

It might well be contended that language-deprived children should have motivated learning experiences with classification tasks, with the teacher supplying the necessary oral language to show the child how one thinks through language. Children enjoy these tasks when they are removed from a test situation. Call the activity "Look, Think, and Find Time," and they will participate enthusiastically. Many of Dr. Marianne Frostig's materials (4) for improving visual perception could be used for such activity.

Language-deprived children will need continuing special consideration throughout the elementary grades. For example, if a fourth-grade teacher in a slum school wishes to introduce a creative writing project employing verse to express children's reactions to colors, her work will be quite different from that of a teacher in a school with a middle-income population. She will provide much more preparatory time, possibly sharing some of her own responses and bringing examples from literature into the classroom. Even then, the children may not have in their own mental warehouses the vocabulary needed to express their ideas. It may be necessary for the teacher to cover the chalkboards with words such as *sad, joyous, gloomy, cool, a rainy day, like dying,* etc., to give the children the tools with which to create. Some children may say they respond to no colors. The teacher can then use her knowledge of the individual child to ask such questions as, "Let's see, Sam, you are dreaming of the day when you will own a car. What color would you like it to be? Oh! A red one. Why don't you think about why the car's color matters to you. Think of some words to tell how you would feel at the wheel of a new red car."

Teachers use many ingenious ways of motivating vocabulary growth. Better ways for distributing and sharing such methods are needed.

*Limitations in the Phonetic Structure of Language.*

Educators are becoming fully cognizant of the importance of phonic skills in the total language arts instructional program. To be able to spell, for instance, a child must think of written symbols (letters) for the speech sounds he hears. To read, he must think of the sounds of the letters he sees.

It is questionable whether the professional training of elementary school teachers provides sufficient work in the areas of language development, speech improvement, and individual differences in speech and language. Teachers need to be skilled, critical listeners. They should be able to recognize the sound substitutions, omissions, and distortions which children produce. Schools including speech clinicians as part of special staff could provide such information to teachers through an economical amount of inservice training. Speech errors could be related to the particular phonetic charts employed in the reading program to improve teachers' skills. They could then discriminate between speech errors typical for particular dialects, for nonstandard English, and for clinical speech defects.

The goal for speech sound articulation should not be absolute uniformity. Regional expressions and dialect often enrich our total language. Change should be a goal, however, when differences lessen the intelligibility of speech or when they are commonly identified as nonstandard English. The Norwegian's *dis* for *this* may be enchanting, but the American Negro high school graduate who says *dis, dem,* and *dose* may not get the job he is seeking! The nonstandard English of those from the subculture of poverty might almost be considered a *second language.* Golden (5) advises, "Speech improvement must be self-improvement. We cannot change the student's patterns for him, but we can bring about awareness of a need for change, aid him in finding ways to make the change, and encourage his efforts at self-improvement."

*Limitations in the Syntactic Structure of Language.*

The use of language is the conveyance of meaning. Clarity of meaning depends upon grammatical structure, which involves inflection, word order, intonation, and word variations which indicate number, time action, and other functions. The best way to learn English grammar is the *Mother's Method,* through which the child with an adequate early language environment gains automatic grammatical responses through audition of the language he hears in the home. This *automaticity* of response is essential. Concepts and symbols will not give usable and meaningful speech and language unless the language processes become automatic. Consider, for example, the ability to form plurals, which range from simple addition of *s*(*toy—toys*), to the inflectional change demanded by the addition of *es* (*church—churches*), to the formation of irregular plurals, *man—men, mouse—mice, leaf—leaves,* etc. Ervin's (3) study of structure in children's language indicated that most children had acquired the ability to form plurals before the age of three.

Through the writer's experience with language-deprived children, it has become obvious that many children lack this ability at age six or even age eight! The Auditory-Vocal Automatic Test, a subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities, includes nine items of plural formation. Most slum children form no more than three or four of the plurals correctly. Some creative teacher could easily devise a card game which would make repetition of correct plurals fun for the children.

Another automatic language ability assessed by the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities is that of being able to make comparisons by use of the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives and adverbs. For example, the examiner shows the child a picture of two cakes and says, "This cake looks good. This cake looks even ............" Few young slum children are able to supply the comparative form *better*. Typical responses are *good, gooderer, gooder*. One eight-year-old Mexican-American child pointed to the first cake, saying, "This one little good,"—then, pointing triumphantly to the other cake, "This one *yes* good!"

One group test of intelligence for second-grade children requires the teacher to use in the oral directions ten terms of superlative degree; for example, *largest, nearest,* and *fewest.*

Some language texts introduce this study of degree as late as sixth grade, even though the children need such oral skills for the first years of formal learning.

Is anything more mercurial than the English verb? All children experience some difficulty with the structural shifts and changes required for proper person, tense, and number. The verbs *to be* and *have* are customarily slaughtered by language-deprived children, since *they was* and *we has* sound right to them. One typical distortion by Negro children from language-deprived homes is, "She don't be here today."

The writer made a study comparing written language of three groups of ten-year-old children last year. The groups were: Negroes from low-income public housing; Spanish-speaking from a low-income area; profoundly deaf Caucasian children in a special oral day class. The Negro children made as many verb errors of number and tense as did the deaf children! Spanish-speaking children were unable to employ clauses for better expression. Negro children did not use progressive verb forms. The writer's observations confirm this problem. When shown action pictures and asked, "What is he doing?" the Negro child will usually respond, "He skatin'," omitting the auxiliary, rather than "He is skating."

It seems evident that language-deprived children need repetitive, structured oral experiences with proper language usage early in their school experience. When a six-year-old girl asks, "I doing good a little?" or a seven-year-old boy says, "You know that River Street? Him live Johnnie" it is time for remediation to achieve correct word order and usage.

Some language-deprived children may have vocabularies just good enough to mask their real language problems. *Naming* is not of much use if a child is unable *to tell something about* the object he has named. Such children need oral experiences with guidance in *telling about things,* so they can ask themselves, *What is it?, What color is it?, What size?, What looks like it?, How is it used?, What is it made of?*

It is important to improve language usage as early as possible in the child's life. A recent study (2) indicates that high school students' awareness of structural relationships in English does not improve significantly after three years of formal study of English grammar! Other evidence supports the hypothesis that early instruction is most effective in changing language usage.

Since language skills and learning ability are so interdependently related, surely our schools have a responsibility to children with limited language. This responsibility involves adequate definition of the problem and commitment to the development of teaching methods that will meet the children's special needs. If the slum child's foundation of language skill can be strengthened through preschool, kindergarten, and primary programs, he will then be able to compete more successfully during the subsequent years of school. Attention to this one specific symptom of *poverty* is not a total solution. However, as is stated by I. M. Berlin (1), "Beginning to learn academic material is one way of beginning to deal with the real world. The successes in the mastery of subject matter mean a great deal to a sick child's concept of himself."

No special educational techniques can succeed in the wrong *attitudinal climate!* Progress in teaching slum children will depend upon the feelings of the staff of such schools. If children are viewed as *unteachable* or *hopeless from the start,* both teachers and children will find school a place of frustration and discouragement. Successful education of the children of poverty must be viewed as an exciting professional challenge and as a social and economic necessity.

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ROSE MUKERJI AND HELEN F. ROBISON

# A Head Start in Language

"Git offa here!" "Dis ain't no big enough," or "I don't got no milk," are examples of language structure frequently heard in classrooms where disadvantaged children predominate. They point up some of the language deficits of these children as reported by a number of recent research studies. But teachers find considerable difficulty in formulating programs to help overcome language deficits of young children. A recent study in a kindergarten in a New York City "special service school"[1] was undertaken by the writers to develop guidelines and teaching strategies for language growth of a class of five year olds.[2]

Language was conceived in its dual role as social communication as well as an indispensable tool for conceptualization. Bruner points out that children must be able to translate their experiences into symbolic form, that is, language, in order to deal with those things which are remote in time or space or somehow not physically present.[3] Therefore, language emphasis became an integral part and function of the total curriculum, a considerable part of which was newly conceived for the study.

## *Language Deficits*

The "nonverbal" label frequently applied to disadvantaged children has not been supported by the data acquired from frequent interviews, recordings, and observations of the children. One five year old, whose interview was tape recorded, agreed to tell a story, which follows:

> Once upon a time there was a little mommy. Mommy came right up to de little girl 'n de little girl named Lottie her was a bear, a little bear named Goldy. Goldilock was sleepin' 'n de bed 'n so, uh, de bear said, "Somebody been eatin' my porri [porridge]" 'n the little mommy said, "Somebody been eatin' my porri." 'N so they went upstairs 'n there was Goldilock. Goldilocks sleepin' in de bed 'n so Goldilock was sleep fast. In den, uh, her run 'cause it was a bear. 'N de bear live inna ol' bear house. 'N so her went her, 'n de de baby, de baby bear come back 'n he was cryin' 'cause Goldilocks, uh, broke his, her chair, uh 'n so Goldilocks mudders came 'n, her mudder was named Goldilocks, 'n her turn de wheel 'n her wanna listen to de voice of Goldilock boyfriend. 'N so there wasn't no boyfriend, only was a bear. So the mommas tol' her her come right over 'n so her speak to her.

Other children, from different ethnic backgrounds, told stories which reflected similar problems of enunciation, pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, and standard English sentence structure. They generally were quite limited in their knowledge and use of classifying terms. For example, they did not know that they, as individuals, made up their kindergarten class or that apples, bananas, and oranges are classified as fruit. Most children, unlike their middle-

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[1] The New York City Board of Education designates "special service schools" because of various factors indicating cultural and economic disadvantage.

[2] This study was supported in part by a grant of the U. S. Office of Education, Project S-320.

[3] Jerome S. Bruner, "The Course of Cognitive Growth," *American Psychologist*, 19 (January, 1964) 13.

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class counterparts, had so little familiarity with written symbols that they could neither recognize nor write their own names, failed to use picture clues in many instances, and could not identify a map by name or by its use. In addition to language symbols, the children needed to become aware of other nonverbal forms of symbolic representation. They also needed to gain awareness that maps and globes, signs, pictures, numerals, tallies, and arbitrary symbols are important ways of representing real things and ideas so that their ability to acquire and utilize important data could be broadened.

### *Teaching Strategies for Language Growth*

All teaching strategies developed in the study to further language growth began with stimulating experiences and intense personal involvement of the children. Karplus has said, "The function of education is to guide children's development by providing them with particularly informative and suggestive experiences as a base for their abstractions. At the same time, children must be provided with a conceptual framework that permits them to perceive the phenomena in a meaningful way and to integrate their inferences into generalizations of lasting value.[4]

The study developed some experiences centered on buying, cooking, and eating food because young children are so responsive to food-oriented episodes. A description of specific planning to encourage skills of classification has been reported elsewhere.[5] Other experiences were selected to facilitate children's information gathering by offering hitherto inaccessible sources of first-hand information about contemporary life such as those centering around air transport. Vivid and novel experiences were also expected to illumine and clarify much of the child's world with which he is in contact but about which he is either ignorant or confused. The excitement and interest of these experiences stimulated rapid vocabulary growth as new objects and elements had to be named, recalled, referred to, and classified in play situations and in class discussions.

Teaching strategies to foster language growth provided for free play, structured episodes, and individual teacher-child and small group interaction. Play opportunities were expanded, both in duration and in the supply of props, costumes, and equipment for children's spontaneous exploration of roles and life-based activities or fantasied events. During the sixty to ninety-minute play period, the teacher used some time to work individually with one or two children or with small groups of children in structured language activities. Before and after the play period, there were often total class discussions, regular music and dance periods, and other routine group activities. Milk and cookie snacks sometimes closed the play period, sometimes preceded it. Within this very flexible format, experimentation of many kinds went on.

### *Language Growth in Free Play*

When the teacher was encouraging children to develop airplane play through trips and provision of appropriate props, she wrote signs for children to use in their play, to help them remember new words, and to use them correctly. The airplane pilots' caps had "pilot" written on the visor; the ticket clerks had desk signs denoting "ticket clerk" and "reservation clerk." The children quickly associated the word with the correct sign, referring to signs, asking for them, trading them back and forth, getting them out for play from a special shelf, and returning them after play. Name recognition and interest in writing names soared as ticket play developed. Boxes of plywood alphabet letters, upper and lower case, were available to children who preferred to assemble the letters of a name rather than write them. Later, the teacher introduced a set of alphabet letters on stamps, with an ink pad, and name "printing" became very popular. Charts with pictures and names of objects such as baggage and hand truck served to remind children of oral words they knew because the picture clues were very clear.

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[4] Robert Karplus, "One Physicist Looks at Science Education," in Harry A. Passow and Robert R. Leeper (eds.), *Intellectual Development: Another Look*. Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1964, p. 81.

[5] Helen F. Robison and Rose Mukerji, "Language and Concept Development with Disadvantaged Kindergarten Children," *Educational Leadership* 23 (November, 1965).

Children were stimulated to word and language growth in their free play as they drew upon interesting concrete experiences for new ideas, fresh information, and satisfying content for their play. The teacher helped to stabilize word meanings and new vocabulary in her discussions with children, in the distinctive props provided for play, in her comments and evaluation after the play period, and in the structured experiences which served to support and advance language progress made in free play.

### *Structured Experiences*

Frequent total group discussions just before or a few days after a trip or new experience offered opportunities to use new vocabulary and express understandings. Often, after such discussions, the teacher retold the story to the class, injecting selected vocabulary. These stories were typed on a primer typewriter and duplicated. Some stories contained blank pages for children's own pictures; others were illustrated by the teacher for use as story clues. Finally, the teacher tape recorded the story so that four children could listen to it simultaneously through headsets while following the little booklet with its picture clues. Children enjoyed this activity, asking to hear the story again and again, turning the pages correctly, and often reliving the experience with gestures and remarks. This opportunity to relive an exciting experience undoubtedly contributed to the popularity and effectiveness of this strategy.

Each week, a few children were invited to take home library books—with their standard language structure and good vocabulary—from the classroom collection, so that older siblings or adults could read a story several times to them. When a child returned his book the following week, the teacher requested him to "read" the story to the whole class. The teacher helped by supplying words freely or referring to pictures clues as needed. Some children seemed to remember stories completely and used much of the author's phraseology and language.

### *Teacher-Child Language Activities*

The teacher's own language provided the one regular, daily model of standard English speech to many of the children during individually planned as well as class activities. The one-to-one relationship of teacher to child was nowhere of greater value than in assisting language growth through work planned for language needs of specific children.

Spontaneous dramatic play with a telephone kit was gradually structured for vocabulary and language practice for part of the time. Using objects or pictures, two children were encouraged to make requests and answer them by using precise naming and descriptive terms and to converse in full sentences.

For those children who had no one at home who read to them, the teacher provided tape-recorded stories which were especially useful in approximating a one-to-one relationship between teacher and child. But such children also needed someone to respond to questions, to repeat some especially delightful passage, or just to react in human terms to a shared experience. Obviously, the important affective stimulation implicit in close teacher-child relationships cannot be duplicated mechanically or in mass situations for young children. Optimum work with these children requires more than one teacher in each class.

### *Audio-Visual Activities*

In addition to considerable use of the tape recorder and telephone, other audio-visual resources were provided to enhance language growth. Colored slides and eight-millimeter movies recorded scenes the children had visited on trips as well as their own play activities in the classroom. Extensive conversation was carried on between the teacher and small groups of children as they examined slides in table viewers and movies on a tiny rear view screen projected by a small, cartridge-fed projector. They delighted in naming and labelling objects and activities, recapturing forgotten details, putting impressions in order, and gradually seeing relationships and meanings emerge.

Since trips are too expensive to be duplicated with any frequency, movies and slides served to preserve the data for leisurely and repetitive exploration in class. Each time the children viewed these pictures, they remembered or shared more detail, acquired more information about the pictures from the teacher and from other children, and practiced using new words and descriptive language. Translating their experiences and understandings, that is their concepts, into language helps children to carry forward their thinking processes and to terminate the thought sequence in a successful or rewarded overt response, according to Carroll.[6] When the teacher can help children experience success and mastery in school, she has forged a powerful strategy for motivating children's learning.

### *Specific Goals Lead to More Precise Tools*

Analysis of changes in the children's behavior support the effectiveness of certain teaching strategies in helping disadvantaged children make noticeable progress toward overcoming some of their language deficits. Determining specific goals of standard English for social communication and conceptualization moved the teacher to evolve new skills which were sharply differentiated to meet clearly defined needs. Because children's deficits were frequently assessed by both observational data and simple, informal tests, the teacher acquired precise diagnostic information about the needs of specific children. Thus, new teaching strategies developed more precise and varied tools to assist children in their efforts to conceptualize their world and to encode their understandings in language capable of communication, storage, and higher levels of thinking.

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EDDIE G. PONDER

# Understanding the Language of the Culturally Disadvantaged Child

### *Introduction*

The urban schools of our country are faced with a sizeable number of school-age children who are considered educationally and culturally disadvantaged.[1] This presents a challenge to the public schools which try to provide an effective educational program for the boys and girls of this segment of the population. There is evidence, however, of a wealth of untapped resources among disadvantaged children. Because their self-images, motivations, and cultural horizons are very low, they are prevented from achieving at a level commensurate with their ages and abilities.

### *Phenomena Regarding the Oral Language of Disadvantaged Children*

> Lack of verbal symbols for common objects and ideas—Speech patterns which cause frequent misunderstandings in oral communication.

The above statements, extracted from one of the first reports of the Milwaukee Great Cities Study,[2] are indicative of findings and impressions of many school psychologists relative to the oral language productions of the majority of disadvantaged children. One has to take into account, however, that the standardized tests available and used are mostly standardized outside the experiences and language of these children. Most standardized instruments used to measure the language of the disadvantaged child do not tap the kind and quality of language that he possesses. His patterns of speech, usage, and pronunciation do not, for the most part, approximate the standards of language expected by the school (commonly referred to as school language).

The oral language of the disadvantaged child is usually on the "vulgar" level. The "vulgar" level is used here to denote a language category of the people or the crowd (vulgus). In addition, the "vulgar" level is usually designated as the lowest level of language. The common man without adequate educational experiences speaks mostly on the "vulgar" level.

The oral language habits of disadvantaged Negro and white children coming from the same region are similar. In working directly with children and parents from the two racial groups, one can easily discover many similarities in language usage, oral expression, and sentence sense. There are, of course, some differences. The differences, however, are of degree, not kind.

Following are some samples of the oral language (along with comments) of socially

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[1] The terms culturally and educationally disadvantaged are used interchangeably with urban disadvantaged, socially disadvantaged, disadvantaged, culturally deprived, experience poor, educationally underprivileged, children with limited backgrounds, and the disaffected.

[2] Milwaukee, Wisconsin Board of School Directors, "Orientation Classes for In-Migrant—Transient Children, Report I, Part 1," October, 1961.

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disadvantaged children. The first two samples selected for use have been extracted from the final report of the Milwaukee study on Orientation Classes for In-Migrant—Transient Children.[3] The third and final sample was selected from an actual classroom discussion in one of the Milwaukee Orientation Classes for In-Migrant—Transient Children where a tape recorder is familiar equipment and was used to record this session.[4]

*Sample I*

*An Original Play*

Students used the tape recorder in putting this play together.

*Boss:* Hey you, boy, come here (menacingly). I thought I asked you for two bales. You got a bale and a half here.

*Worker:* Yes sir, you did and I'm trying to pick the rest of it.

*Boss:* I hear you been playing and loafing out there in the field.

*Worker:* No sir, that ain't so. I been working hard.

*Boss:* You—yeah you, come here. You the one who told me this boy was playing and laughing stead o'doing his work?

*Worker #2* Yas sir, and he keeps the rest of us from doing our work.

*Boss:* I reckon um have to give you a beatin'. Kneel down. (Boss lashes worker on back.) Now get up. You got a woman?

*Worker:* Naw sir, I ain't married.

*Boss:* Boy, go get yourself a woman. Maybe you'll work better and get them bales picked.

*Worker:* (Student goes off stage, selects a girl.) E. says, "I don't want to be in that old play, Mrs. Carter." Other students urge E., "Aw go on, E." E. and worker go to field.

*Worker:* Bossman, this is my wife.

*Boss:* You got any children old enough to work in the field?

*Wife:* No sir, they're in school.

*Boss:* Send them out here to help this good for nothin' man of yours.

*Wife:* (Resolutely) They're staying in school.

(as they leave the field) I don't care whether he ever gets his cotton picked. My children are gonna stay in school, even if I have to leave Mississippi and go to Milwaukee and live with my sister. The children will have a chance up there.

One can readily see how environment helps to shape an individual's attitudes and values. Fortunately, special personnel providing social and developmental histories as well as psychological evaluations were available to the teacher in her efforts to try to understand her students through their use of oral and written expression. In this play, it is interesting to note the male acceptance of the Southern social system from which they came. Too, the teacher observed that the boys laughed as they played these roles and expressed no resentment toward the social system portrayed. (They didn't even react to the name, *boy.*) On the other hand, the girls did not like the image portrayed. Also, it appears that the female values education. The play seems to suggest that immorality, values, and attitudes often thought of as being *inherently* associated with lower-class status (and sometimes racial minority groups) can be and are influenced or conditioned by authority figures of a supposedly higher social order. In addition, this play seems to support the notion that disadvantaged families are migrating from rural impoverished circumstances to the urban zone to better themselves. The extended family is most often crucial in this regard.

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[3] Milwaukee, Wisconsin Board of School Directors, "Orientation Classes for In-Migrant—Transient Children, Final Report," March, 1964.

[4] The comments following the language samples are a result of staff conferences on selected children enrolled in the high school orientation class. The author wishes to acknowledge the professional services of Mrs. Dorothy Carter, Teacher of the class, Mrs. Lottie Porter, Project Social Worker, and Mr. Hoyt Harper, Project Psychologist.

*Sample II*

> When mama and papa died, my brother sent for us to come live with him. He can't read and write and he's so ashamed. He ain't never had no trouble on his job tho'. He wants to give us a chance to finish high school. My sister-law is nex' to the angels—she's so good to me and my little brothers. There's a baby in the house that loves me so much—I don't know why because I'm only his aunt, but they all say he looks just like me. I do love that little baby.

This sample seems to suggest strong family ties which facilitate the social system of the extended family. Moreover, one can sense the value of education which the family holds even though the male head of the household appears to lack a positive self-image because of his inability to read and write. Nevertheless, there seems to be a sense of pride in the work of the male as well as love of family. Note also the poetic quality of the line, "My sister-law is nex' to the angels."

*Sample III*

> *William:* Will you have seven years of bad luck if you break a mirror?
>
> *Scott:* I broke mine and that was bad luck enough cause it was brand new. But, I'm gonna buy me a new one. Bad luck just comes—you don't have to break nothing—But you got to make good luck by working hard and saving-getting an education.

This dialogue between two students indicates adequate language to express interesting ideas, aspirations, and philosophy of life.

The samples contained language of Negro and white students. Was it possible to determine racially one from the other?

The Cratis Williams' studies on Southern Appalachian speech also indicate regional characteristics which are interracial. Further, Williams asserts that words, more particularly verb forms and even diction, when examined comparatively, reveal little that is confined only to Appalachia.

Following is a selected list of some of the most common verbs used in mountain speech which was developed by Williams:[5]

| *Present* | *Past* | *Past Participle* |
|---|---|---|
| (ask) ax | axt | axt |
| bring | brung | brung |
| burst | busted | busted |
| drive | driv | driv |
| fight | fit | fit |
| hear | heared | heared |
| reach | rech | rech |
| see | seed | seed |
| sneak | snuck | snuck |
| take | takened | takened |
| teach | teached | teached |

Although the above list does not indicate acceptable verb forms in our culture, it, nevertheless, displays verb forms with certain systematic characteristics. While the verbs in the past tense and past participle are at the "vulgar" level, they are within the framework of regional speech which is fluent and meaningful. There are many positive aspects of mountain speech. It is colorful, metaphorical, lyrical, rhythmical. Frazier[6] asserts that the great mass of children we consider poorly languaged actually have quite a lot of language. Therefore, Frazier argues, if we let them, they can talk a blue streak about the things they know how to talk about. Thus, it would seem reasonable to suggest that we need to understand and learn the language which the disadvantaged child brings to the school situation if we are to "take him where he is."

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[5] Cratis D. Williams, "Verbs in Mountain Speech," *Mountain Life and Work*. Berea, Ky.: Council of the Southern Mountains, Inc., Spring, 1962, pp. 15-19.

[6] Alexander Frazier, "Helping Poorly Languaged Children," *Elementary English*, February, 1964, pp. 149-153.

Some of the language of the disadvantaged child may be less fluent. For example, these children often answer with a nod or one-word reply for fear of not being able to answer correctly in the school culture. On the other hand, generally speaking, the child is from a home where the parents are educationally and culturally disadvantaged, thereby affording little opportunity for the development of his oral language. Moreover, the child is usually from a large family living in a crowded, noisy apartment. The noise, however, does not represent meaningful stimuli.

The extended family is not uncommon in the family structure of the disadvantaged child. Uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, and sometimes very close friends are a part of the family structure. It would appear that the disadvantaged child has only advantages regarding language development with so many people around. The extended family structure, however, may cause serious discontinuity in the language development of the child. He learns language from the many people around him, likely speaking in varied pitches and accents. Lost in the shuffle of so many people, often in a crowded space, the child has limited opportunities for help in learning to label the objects in his environment. His opportunities for enrichment within and outside the encapsulated, socially impoverished environment are also limited.

Allison Davis[7] stated that one night he attended a movie on Chicago's Southside to gain further insights into the language of disadvantaged adults. He sat behind two women who were engaged in a lengthy discussion trying to label two animals (rhinoceros—hippopotamus) which had been flashed on the screen in a zoo scene. Davis discovered (1) that these women were born and reared in the South, (2) that they had never been to a zoo or circus because being Negro in their previous locale of the South prevented them from attending, and (3) that the women had not become acquainted with these animals in their sketchy educational or experiential backgrounds. This illustration by Davis would seem to support the notion that the disadvantaged child is the product of a disadvantaged family in which his opportunities for learning to label, including feedback regarding labeling, are limited.

These boys and girls pass innumerable resources and objects going from school each day (also in their travels about the community) without the slightest idea as to how to label them. They label them as *a thing, do hickey,* or *somethin' out yonder.* These seemingly crude labels, however, serve an important function in the communication system developed in the disadvantaged populace.

Many idiomatic expressions uttered by the disadvantaged child and his parents seem to baffle the more affluent speaker and often obstruct communication. For example, in some disadvantaged neighborhoods, "I don't care to," can mean "yes, I'm willing," according to the intonation of the speaker. Whether the disadvantaged child utters "twice out of sight" (go around two mountains) in the Kentucky hills or "gwine to tote this poke of 'taters'" (going to carry this bag [sack?] of potatoes) in Mississippi, his oral language is highly clear, understandable, and completely acceptable in his particular social milieu.

### *Should We Try to Change the Language of the Disadvantaged Child?*

It seems of paramount importance that we accept the language of the disadvantaged child. To be "accepting," however, does not indicate a reluctance to "build on" or improve the language habits and skills of the disadvantaged child for fear of alienating him from his family and/or peers in the socially impoverished environment.

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[7] In an address at the New York University sponsored conference, *Integrating Diversity Through the Curriculum,* December 1, 1963.

Disadvantaged parents want their children to improve educationally. In fact, they realize the necessity of a good education. They are perplexed, usually, as to means by which to attain educational ends. Yet, it should be realized that many racial and ethnic groups which presently enjoy high cultural and social positions in the social stratification of our society are descendants of disadvantaged parents and depressed neighborhoods.

There is also concern that it is futile to try to teach the disadvantaged child "correct" language skills because he returns to the impoverished environment only to revert back to his "incorrect" usage of the language. It should be stated that the intent to improve the language skills of the disadvantaged child should not be to train him *only* for a given higher level of language. Rather, he should be made aware of other levels of language, especially as they relate to actual occupational situations in our society. Thus, if the disadvantaged child subsequently becomes verbally mobile, to what degree is his reverting back of importance? Is there a correctness to our language? Tomlinson[8] states that in helping children achieve social standards of language, the teacher should keep in mind that these standards do not deny certain regional characteristics of tone, accent, rhythm, and idiom. Might we think of acceptable ways of expressions for *given* situations as we work with disadvantaged children (and, indeed, all children)?

### *Can We Change the Language of the Disadvantaged Child?*

While it is important to try to assess the amount and quality of the language possessed by disadvantaged children, it is equally important to try to assess their language deficiencies. This will facilitate the establishment of a "communicative" benchmark from which to build more acceptable language usage. Research indicates some interesting findings relative to the language of the disadvantaged child: paucity of language, shorter sentences in speech, poorly structured speech syntactically, and language related to social class.

Cutts[9] states that the utterances, huh—uh . . . huh . . . nuttin . . . naw . . . wuh? . . . cuz . . . unhunh . . .sho! and other *strange noises* [italics mine] that take the place of standard American English reflect the impoverished language background of underprivileged children.

John[10] reports that several studies indicate that children from lower-class backgrounds rely on shorter sentences in their speech than do their middle-class agemates. She further reports from her summary of studies that children from lower-class circumstances have a more limited vocabulary and poorer articulation.

Deutsch,[11] reporting on some of the basic research at the Institute for Developmental Studies, postulates that the lower-class home is not a verbally orientated environment. Moreover, he reports that from observations of lower-class homes, speech sequences appear to be temporally very limited and poorly structured. Thus, Deutsch argues, it is not surprising to find that a major focus of deficit in the children's language development is syntactical organization and subject continuity.

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[8] Loren R. Tomlinson, "Accepting Regional Language Differences in School," *Elementary English.* 30 (November, 1953), 420-423.

[9] Warren G. Cutts, "Reading Unreadiness in the Underprivileged," *NEA Journal,* 52 (April, 1963), 23-24.

[10] Vera P. John, "The Intellectual Development of Slum Children: Some Preliminary Findings," *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,* 33 (October, 1963) 813-822.

[11] Martin P. Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," *Education in Depressed Areas,* Edited by A. Harry Passow. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963, pp. 163-179.

Newton[12] states that the opportunities for language development are stretched on a continuum and the economic "have nots" are often the verbal "have nots" as well.

This brief look into research on language development of disadvantaged children is helpful in providing a frame in which to understand the nature of their language deficiencies. It facilitates the development of an instructional program to more adequately meet their needs. For example, special tapes may be prepared to develop attentional or listening skills. These skills are important first steps with respect to language development. Too, a sequential program may need to be planned which begins with attentional or listening skills and moves to such higher levels as the labeling of objects, and the labeling of similarities and differences in objects and functions of objects. While this example indicates how language may be developed, it also has implications for the development of other skills.

## *Conclusion*

In conclusion, it seems of paramount importance that the language spoken and written by the disadvantaged child be understood by the teacher in order to (1) facilitate meaningful communication and (2) provide a starting point from which to build on the language which he does possess.

The teacher will need to develop good rapport with the children and provide a positive classroom climate in order to free them to express themselves orally. Moreover, good classroom climate will help the teacher gain better opportunities to help children develop "other ways" of speaking and using the language. When good classroom climate exists, children can often be heard to say "I know better than that," or "That sounds like me."

Understanding the language of the disadvantaged child is not as difficult a task as is often assumed; the teacher's attitude and the understanding with which he approaches the task will determine to a large extent the degree of difficulty. Moreover, the teacher's awareness of the individual needs of his children will determine the kinds of activities and program to be provided in the classroom. It is quite likely that the approach in helping the disadvantaged child develop language facility is applicable for use with advantaged children. The teacher will in both cases plan his instruction around the language strengths and the language needs which the children bring to the school situation.

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Edgar Dale

# Vocabulary Development of the Underprivileged Child

Our concern as teachers is to see that our students live a fulfilled life, that they develop their potential. The job of the teacher is to liberate them from the bonds of ignorance, ineptitude, prejudice, irrationality; to develop the skills, attitudes, and information necessary for the citizen in a democracy. Unless this philosophy actively infuses programs for vocabulary development (or any kind of development of the underprivileged child), we shall be wasting our efforts. Further, nothing less than a revolutionary effort will do much toward the solving of this problem. The following suggestions, then, should be seen in the light of such a possibility.

When I speak of the underprivileged child I mean the children usually of the inner city, those farthest away from the suburbs, the children of migrants. Often we are talking about Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, white children from the South. I know that when I use the term "underprivileged" child and sometimes "lower-class child" there is a genuine hazard of stereotyping. It suggests that *all* children who live in slums or in the inner city are very much alike. Actually they are quite different.

Let me point out first that nearly all writers dealing with the underprivileged child believe that environmental rather than genetic factors account for the general differences that are found, and find no evidence in the science of heredity to cause them to think otherwise. We start, therefore, with the hypothesis that sharp changes can be made in the background of experience of these students, in their school and out-of-school learning, and consequently in their IQ's or other tests of mental and educational development. The basis for such a sweeping conclusion has been presented by Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago in his volume *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics.* He says:

> The absolute scale of vocabulary development and the longitudinal studies of educational achievement indicate that approximately 50 per cent of general achievement at grade 12 (age 18) has been reached by the end of grade 3 (age 9). This suggests the great importance of the first few years of school as well as the preschool period in the developing of learning patterns and general achievement. These are the years in which general learning patterns develop most rapidly, and failure to develop appropriate achievement and learning in these years is likely to lead to continued failure or near failure throughout the remainder of the individual's school career. (p. 27)

Let's look first at some of the characteristics of the underprivileged child. These are findings of Martin Deutsch of New York Medical College, Gertrude Whipple of the Detroit Public Schools, Roger Brown and Ursula Bellugi of Harvard, John B. Carrol of Harvard, and Basil Bernstein of the

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University of London. I do not mean that this is a consensus of all of their writing, but rather that these are the chief sources of the following statements:

1) Models of excellence in use of vocabulary or sentence structure are not easily available to these deprived children.
2) They come from broken rather than intact homes. Often there is a nonexistent or weak father image.
3) Underprivileged children stay closer to home, in their own neighborhood. Their physical ranging is limited.
4) They have a negative self-image.
5) Their auditory span, their capacity for sustained attention is less than middle- or upper-class children.
6) They use a smaller number of less varied words to express themselves.
7) Their sentences are shorter and more categorical. There are more incomplete sentences.
8) These children meet limited variability in the kinds of problems they face, have no opportunity to be challenged by the complexities faced by middle-class children.
9) Home tasks tend to be motoric, not motivated by distant goals. There is emphasis on the immediate.
10) There is probably less listening to TV or radio, but here the data are limited.
11) There is a lack of manipulable objects in the home.

Given this background, let us see how it relates to the development of vocabulary. It is in the environing culture that we must look for those factors which inhibit the language development of underprivileged children—with resultant meager vocabulary and inadequate syntax. The underprivileged are usually ghettoized, concentrated in the inner city or its fringes, do not freely associate with suburban children. There is little communication, defined as "the sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality."

The average Negro adult has approximately an eighth-grade education: the white adult has almost a twelfth-grade education. One is an eighth grader, the other a twelfth grader. To be a parent with a twelfth-grade education means that you can usually read with relative ease and understanding such magazines as *Time, Life, Newsweek,* and others. Data regarding the readers of these magazines show that those below the eighth grade represent only a small proportion. Indeed, we know that about 70 percent of the readers of "slick paper" magazines are high school graduates. The same point could be made about the reading of serious political, economic, or governmental articles in the daily press. The average Negro parent cannot bring these complicated ideas to his children.

Second, words name things and actions with which we come into physical contact, within our perceptual range. As I noted earlier, the actual physical range of the underprivileged child is restricted. He doesn't move as far away from home base as does the middle-class child. An example is the learning of animal concepts. The middle-class child tested on the names of animals may do very well. One boy, when questioned as to why he knew the names of so many animals, said: "My parents always stop at animal farms so that we can see them."

But who takes the lower-class child to see the animals in the zoo? If he lives in a broken home, there may be no father to do this. Or even if he is in an intact home, there may be no method of easy transportation, such as the middle-class child has. How would the child of the inner city or slum get farm experiences? It would have to be a part of a planned school program.

The effectiveness of such a program was well illustrated by the experience of a Cleveland teacher who sharply increased the reading and vocabulary level of a group of second graders by this approach. These experiences were needed because the downtown school in which she worked was dominated by warehouses, produce and grocery markets, and other business establishments.

Forty pupils in her group were at a low level of the second grade and could not master simple reading books suited to their age. The activities they engaged in included planning and making a visit to a farm, meeting the farmer and his family, exploring the barn, operating a water pump, riding on a tractor, looking at the combine, seeing "real" cows and a baby calf, playing in the straw.

Returning to the school, they recorded in pictures and on tape what they liked best. Willie said, "I liked the cows." Ronald said, "I saw a apple tree. It was full of blossoms, so pretty, and after while the tree will have apples and I would like to go back and eat them apples." Stanley described a rake as "a thing that you make a garden with. Got a long handle, look like a comb, and you put the points on the ground, pull the dirt along when the farmer makes a garden." Fanny Mae found out that a duck is a "quack-quack who swim in the water." She also learned about a silo: "I know what that is now. It's a big high thing out beside the barn, and it's a big old round thing the farmer cuts up corn stalks and puts them in and save them all winter for the animals to eat." All but three of the forty children were brought up to the standard reading level by the end of the year.

The deprived child, then, has actually been physically restricted in the number of things he has seen, heard, touched, and tasted. He lacks perceptual experience. There is also a lack of sequencing, the giving of order to these experiences. The child does not have a satisfactory filing system for storage or retrieval of experiences. This, after all, is what is meant by vocabulary and syntax—putting new and old ideas into new and varying patterns.

But perceptual experience is not enough. Furthermore, perceptual experience is not guaranteed by the presence of things to be perceived, or we would all be able to name the trees, the flowers, the birds around us. Martin Deutsch has pointed out in *Education in Depressed Areas* that the child not only lacks perceptual experience but sustained attention as well, the perseverance necessary to master these experiences.

Why do lower-class children often do poorly on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test? One Negro educator with whom I discussed this question showed me the test and reasoned this way: "Here is a picture of a wagon with three wheels. What is wrong with it? The child sees nothing wrong with it. He often plays with a wagon with no wheels at all. Here is a table with three legs. This is not uncommon in his home. Why should he see anything wrong with it?"

The answer may be more complicated than this. Adults in primitive cultures who are shown a photograph of themselves may not know who it is. They learn this by having someone note the congruence of the various items in the photograph with the individual himself. Certainly the deprived child would not choose an *actual* wagon with three wheels if one with four wheels was available. But he may not be able to perceive the line drawing of a wagon as representing the same wagon which he chose or failed to choose. This must be learned, and the difficulty the typical pupil has in reading graphs and charts indicates the problem faced. Can you easily understand the symbols used on a blueprint or in a wiring diagram?

We may be able to see differences in the real things but not in their representation. That persons of limited ability can make complicated discriminations is illustrated by an experience I had walking through the woods in Ohio with a boy whose IQ was about 60. He had left school in the fourth or fifth grade. He named all the trees as we went along—chestnut, ironwood, beech, pin oak, wild cherry, black walnut, *etc.* Then I said, "I don't know how to tell the difference between the wild cherry tree and the black walnut. How do you tell the difference?"

His answer was simple. "You look at them." To him this was just as stupid a question as it would be to ask a fourteen-year-old boy, "How do you tell the difference between a Chevrolet and a Pontiac?" He would reply, "You look at them."

I am making the point that if we stay at the concrete level, dullness or brightness will not be the *major* conditioning factor of growth in vocabulary. If we set up an environment for children in which they can taste and touch and smell, manipulate, see, feel, work on materials, they will be able to name and to label. The brighter may learn faster than the duller, but all will be able to learn.

This would suggest, of course, that a program of nursery school education should enable children to work with wood of various kinds, to paint, to cut out things with scissors, to eat varied foods or prepare foods within the school, make visits, go on study trips—and to discuss all these activities. This is important because children learn by active contact with things that make a difference to them.

The teacher's role, then, is one of aiding the child to self discovery. He observes the child's rate of development and moves the child on to the next task when he is ready. He listens to the child as the child discovers writing and reading. He works with the child to help him see the relationship between sound and symbol.

The early vocabulary of children shows an emphasis on nouns. The relational terms, the qualifying terms, the complex sentences come later. So we may set up the basic premise that a major factor in the early development of language will be rich, concrete experience in which the child is involved and in which there is an explicit plan to name and to discuss.

Now we come to another critical factor in concrete experience. We may think, for example, that the word *pet* is a concrete, clear-cut name that all children would easily learn. Not so. Many children in a deprived area in Washington, D. C., did not know the word *pet*, according to a study made by the teachers. Further, even when some teaching was done with this term, it showed limited growth over a period of time.

Why? We must realize that many words which *seem* quite concrete to the middle-class teacher or to the middle-class child are indeed abstractions to the deprived child. The child living in an overcrowded apartment does not usually have pets. A dog requires a license, purchased foods, medical attention, *etc.* The word *pet* is an abstraction. It is an abstraction which applies not merely to a dog or a cat but it might apply also to a lizard, a frog, to any animal requiring constant care and given a certain amount of affection.

I asked my four-year-old granddaughter what a pet was. She looked at me with an air of disbelief and curiosity which said, "Is grandfather playing a trick on me?" Of course she knew what a pet was, and she knew it because she had had pets and they had been so named. The idea of pet was internalized, in her bones.

As we work with deprived children we must realize that some terms which we assume are concrete, are abstract and unknown to them. At this point we may ask whether the premise of providing rich school experience is enough. Does this furnish us with adequate guidelines for the curriculum? I don't think it does. We must have an alert teacher who is aware of the out-of-school experiences of the child and how these experiences can be enriched.

There must be close cooperation with the home — difficult as this may sometimes be. There must be enhanced opportunities to make and hear increasingly complicated sentences. This means listening to recordings, making recordings, doing role-playing, putting on plays, viewing specially designed films, filmstrips, and television programs. It means more questions and answers about things that matter, more riddles, more jokes.

Usually when the issue of the vocabulary of the deprived child is discussed I am told that the Negro child knows certain words that the white child does not; that he has a unique, concrete, expressive language. Are there key areas where the deprived child is likely to have vocabulary not possessed by the middle-class child? Does the deprived child have a skill in creating metaphors not possessed by the middle-class child? John Brewer, of the Miller Elementary School in Pittsburgh, has listed a number of synonyms which pupils use for common words:

cigarette—bush, joint, weed, tips, butt, charge
teacher—mink job, moose, sad sack, Smokey the Bear
a retarded person—way out, goof, knuckle head, lame, hole-in-head
gasoline—soup, thunder, lightning
suit—cloth, the vine
teeth—ivory, snags
mustache—brush
skin—soft stuff, velvet
club—muscle, wood
happy—he's gone, reefer head, he's groovy
crying—kleenex job
overcoat—winter heat
toothbrush—pearl pusher
run—took off, and away we go, split, fade out
pencil—stick
matches—fire
strong—iron head, cement job
outwitted—scooped, tank job, paying his dues
work—sweat job
make-up—bucket of paint
thief—glue, sticky, chicken-picker
hat—lid, sky
water—wet stuff, rock on rye
pop—oil, sweet water, bubble
movie—flip time, flicker
house—shack, pad, hole in the wall, crib
snow—white stuff, rice
magistrate—fine peeler, the heat, the man
bald—shine, sunny side up, Mr. Clean
mouse—tiny tim
coins—jingle, hopping Johns, dust
sleep—cat eye, shut eye, knock myself out, red eye
ice cream—snow

Some other examples which I have picked up include the following:

ace—a good friend, companion
everything's everything—everything is wonderful or good
grays—white people
happy shop—liquor store
pull his coat—to bring to someone's attention
the man—the police or a policeman, also a nab
bread ain't done—not very smart
mac—immaculate
walking on the wall—nervous
juiced up—drunk
finger popping—snapping fingers to music
pounding brick—looking for a job

In Jamaica "big eye" means greed; "strong eye," domineering. In Columbus, I have heard "Sure knows his way to High Street," and "keeps his shoe laces tied" used to mean, "He's plenty smart."

It is possible, too, that the child living in the inner city has a perceptive understanding of emotion, not possessed by middle-class children. Perhaps he can size up situations better. Certainly he has been subjected to much more vital experience about the realities of life and death than has his middle-class counterpart. This is worth exploring further. Has the underprivileged child learned to read *people,* that is to interpret skillfully the rejection and acceptance in the faces and behavior of those with whom he comes in contact?

Basil Bernstein, an English sociologist, has pointed out that at school the underprivileged children must learn a second language—the middle-class language of the school and textbook. Here logical modification is expressed in complex grammatical constructions. Symbolism of a high order of generality and a large discriminating range of adjectives and adverbs are now expected of him. This is a language that middle-class children have heard from their first months, and they have fewer problems with it than do the lower-class children.

At school the teacher says, "John, would you mind closing the window?" Whether he minds or not is of little consequence. Think of how often we say: "John, is your desk clean?" meaning, "Clean up your desk"; "Are we all paying attention?" meaning, "Get with it!" Bernstein says that the lower-class child must learn a middle-class way of talking about things. He is thus penalized much as is an immigrant child coming to this country from an alien culture.

Bernstein states that the lower-class parent may say to his child, "Don't sit there." If the child says, "Why?" the parent says, "Because I said so." He is merely being told that he must obey. The middle-class parent, however, may give a reason, namely, "Because you will get too cold," or something else. In short, the middle-class parent tries to state a cause-and-effect relationship, whereas the lower-class parent may merely say: "Because I told you to do it." No new information is gained; there is merely an extension of a command. Thus the middle-class child learns to link cause and effect.

Third, it is likely that the lower-class child will not use the variety of tenses that the middle-or upper-class child will use. He may say, "Baby come" instead of "The baby is coming." He may say, "I go" instead of "I will go." He will also often omit articles, as in the speech of very young children, saying "I dig hole" instead of "I dig *the* hole." And the deprived child may carry this immature speech into the school. Roger Brown and Ursula Bellugi point out in the *Harvard Educational Review,* Spring 1964, that sometimes children will know the articles in a sentence but will not repeat them after the adult because of meager attention span. As they learn to keep more things in mind, the articles are then put in.

Brown and Bellugi also point out that adults tend to stress orally the words carrying the content and include articles and auxiliary verbs and verb endings which the child may omit. The difference then between child language and adult language is not necessarily a difference only in word order. The adult, correcting something the child said, tends to supply needed articles, auxiliary verbs, *etc.,* thus providing a model of how it should be done. How does the deprived child get this experience? Often he doesn't.

Where might we go from here in studying the language of the deprived child? First of all, we need adequate analyses of this language not only in terms of words and their level of generality but also in terms of syntax. I mean the kind of study that Ruth G. Strickland reported in "The Language of Elementary School Children: Its Relationship to the Language of Reading Textbooks and the Quality of Reading of Selected Children," (see bibliography; also Walter Loban, *The Language of Elementary School Children*).

Perhaps one of the reasons that differences grow greater in the upper grades is that the concrete vocabulary of the deprived child becomes increasingly inadequate in meeting language problems faced in school, especially those related to reading. Somewhere around the fourth or fifth grade the words learned by speaking and listening decrease in proportion to words learned by reading. Some of this reading vocabulary consists of synonyms of well-known spoken words, and the underprivileged child can learn them.

But a number of the critical new words are conjunctions. As long as they are the simple conjunctions such as *and*, there may be no problem. Difficulties arise, however, when conjunctions indicating pairing or casual relationship are developed. A time lag occurs before the meaning can be grasped, *e.g.*, "He was not only a scholar but also a gentleman." The idea must be held in mind to the end of the sentence. There are conjunctions of alternates such as *neither . . . nor*, and there are the conjunctions of inference. Some conjunctions are confusingly abstract little words such as *for, or,* and *so.* Some are not usually heard in conversation, such as *consequently, hence, therefore, as a result.* The conjunction often introduces a high level of abstraction, something for which the limited reading and perhaps the limited attention span of the deprived child is a serious handicap.

Another area needing careful study is that of inflectional suffixes used to indicate tense. Berko, for example, in "The Child's Learning of English Morphology," *Word*, (August–December 1958) has made such a study of children's oral language. However, we cannot assume that a child able to make oral inflectional changes in suffixes can make these changes in writing. Gerhard Eichholz has carried on some studies in this field, working with noun plurals, past tense of verbs, comparatives and superlatives, possessive singular and plural. More critical, expanded studies are needed in this area.

It is easy to say that too little is known about the vocabulary development of the deprived, that we need a great deal of research, *etc.* Since only a few persons are going to do this research, it seems to absolve us of responsibility for doing something about this problem. The term "deprived," however, is a relative one. There are deprived persons in our high school and college classes, in wealthy suburban schools, even in our graduate schools. The dynamic potential of these students has not been reached and may not be reached unless we as individual teachers are able to help them see what they can do to remedy past weaknesses and build new strengths.

It is possible that we are overvaluing the verbal, the formal, the highly symbolic language, as contrasted both with informal, expressive, tangible, descriptive language and with nonverbal language. "The oral tradition is still strong," notes Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy* as he discusses the British "working class." Certainly formal language is good for much, but it is not good for everything. I think of the little Japanese boy described in the book *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima. Chibi's playmates reject him and he spends his time thinking, listening, watching. The author writes:

> Just the ceiling was interesting enough for him to watch for hours. The wooden top of his desk was another thing interesting to watch. A patch of cloth on a boy's shoulder

> was something to study. Of course, the window showed him many things all year round. Even when it was raining the window had surprising things to show him. On the playground, if he closed his eyes and listened, Chibi could hear many different sounds, near and far. And Chibi could hold and watch insects and grubs that most of us wouldn't touch or even look at.

When a new teacher came, however, Chibi became important. "Mr. Asobe, the teacher, often took his class to the hilltop behind the school. He was pleased to learn that Chibi knew all the places where the wild grapes and wild potatoes grew. He was amazed to find out how much Chibi knew about all the flowers in our class garden." But Chibi's great triumph came when he imitated the crows:

> First he imitated the voices of newly hatched crows, then he made the mother crow's voice, then he imitated the father crow's voice. He showed how crows cry early in the morning. He showed how crows cry when the village people have some unhappy accident. He showed how crows call when they are happy and gay. Everybody's mind was taken to the far mountainside from which Chibi . . . came to the school.

The story is a parable. It is the story of those who take excessive pride in their indirect knowledge of the world, its symbols and signs, but ignore the rich experience all around them. Don't forget, too, the growth and development that can come from music, drama, the tenderness and compassion of sensitive human relationships.

I suggested at the outset that we need a revolutionary change in order to meet the problems of underprivileged children, youth and adults. We could get it if we were all convinced that (1) there should be universal access to excellence; (2) we should place a high priority on funds for compensatory education of underprivileged children and their parents. If this means delaying putting a man on the moon, let us delay.

The place where you are born in the United States should not dictate educational opportunity. We can move immediately to the equalizing of all educational instructional materials. We have made a good beginning in doing this through providing NDEA funds, through language laboratories, films, and the like. We should proceed speedily to make equality a reality.

Finally, I counsel a tough-minded attitude toward the problem and a tender-minded attitude toward the child. Further, the job of the teacher is not to pick the winners, and this is what we are often doing both in the first grade and in the graduate school. We honor "being on top" and consider it almost immoral to be at the foot of the class. To live a fulfilled life we must share our fulfillment with others. The best symbol for democracy is not a circle, but a ladder.

Finally, and this is the most difficult of all, we must be willing to develop radically new educational patterns to solve these problems. It won't do to put frosting on a stale cake. We must not do better the things we should not be doing at all. Our society itself must be transformed. A friend of mine, the late Bent Taylor (who had a distinguished career in national social work), told me that his high school principal in Louisville, Kentucky, once said to him about an important job that needed to be done: "Bent, if you and I don't do this, who will?"

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KENNETH S. GOODMAN

# Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension

*A thoughtful discussion of the effects which differences in dialect may have in "Big City" classrooms. The author suggests that knowing the range of dialect differences helps the teacher teach reading better.*

The task of learning to read is not an easy one. But it's a lot easier to learn to read one's mother tongue than to learn to read a foreign language, one which the learner does not speak. Actually each of us speaks a particular dialect of a language. Each dialect is distinguished from all other dialects by certain features as: some of its sounds, some of its grammar, some of its vocabulary. The dialect which the child learns in the intimacy of his own home is his mother tongue. All physically normal children learn to speak a dialect. Whatever happens to his language during his life, however fluent and multilingual he may become, this native dialect is his most deeply and permanently rooted means of communication.

Since it is true that learning to read a foreign language is a more difficult task than learning to read a native language, it must follow that it is harder for a child to learn to read a dialect which is not his own than to learn to read his own dialect.

This leads to an important hypothesis: *The more divergence there is between the dialect of the learner and the dialect of learning, the more difficult will be the task of learning to read.*

This is a general hypothesis. It applies to all learners. If the language of the reading materials or the language of the teacher differs to any degree from the native speech of the learners some reading difficulty will result. To some extent also there is divergence between the immature speech of the young learner and adult language norms in the speech community. Children have mastered most but not all of the sounds and syntax of adult speech. A further divergence reflects the fact that older members of any language community are less influenced by language change than are the youth. Thus the teacher may cling to language which is obsolescent in form or meaning. Books particularly lag behind language change since they freeze language at the date of composition. Though this paper is mainly concerned with gross dialect differences it must be remembered, then, that the reading problems discussed apply to some extent to all learners because minor dialect differences are features of even homogeneous speech communities.

### *The Divergent Speaker*

For purposes of discussion we'll call the child who speaks a dialect different from that which the school, text, or teacher treats as standard, *the divergent speaker*. Divergence, of course, is relative and there is by no means agreement on what standard American English is. Divergent is a good

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term however, because it is neutral as a value term and it is important, perhaps critical, in considering the problems of the divergent speaker to avoid labeling his language as bad, sloppy, or substandard. We need to keep clear that, though some dialects may carry more social prestige than others, they are not necessarily more effective in communication. Gleason has said, "It is a safe generalization to say that all languages are approximately equally adequate for the needs of the culture of which they are a part." Dialects represent subcultures. Therefore it can similarly be said that all dialects are equally adequate for the needs of the subculture of which they are a part.

Every child brings to school, when he comes, five or six years of language and of experience. His language is closely intertwined with the culture of his community; it embodies the cultural values and structures the way in which he may perceive his world and communicate his reactions to others.

His language is so well learned and so deeply embossed on his subconscious that little conscious effort is involved for him in its use. It is as much a part of him as his skin. Ironically, well-meaning adults, including teachers who would never intentionally reject a child or any important characteristic of a child, such as the clothes he wears or the color of his skin, will immediately and emphatically reject his language. This hurts him far more than other kinds of rejection because it endangers the means which he depends on for communication and self-expression.

Things that other people say sound right or funny to a child depending on whether they fit within the language norms of his dialect. He has become exceedingly proficient in detecting slight, subtle differences in speech sounds which are significant in his dialect and he's learned to ignore other differences in speech sounds that are not significant. He uses rhythm and pitch patterns of his language with great subtlety. He enjoys puns on language which employ very slight variations in relative pitch and stress. By the time divergent speakers are in the middle grades they have learned to get pleasure from the fact that an in-group pun based on their common divergent dialect is unfunny to an outsider like their teacher who doesn't share the dialect.

All children develop vocabulary which falls generally within the vocabulary pool of their speech community. Through repeated experience common for their culture they have begun to develop complex concepts and express them in their mother tongue.

In every respect the process of language development of the divergent speaker is exactly the same as that of the standard speaker. His language when he enters school is just as systematic, just as grammatical within the norms of his dialect, just as much a part of him as any other child's is. Most important it is a vital link with those important to him and to the world of men.

There are some differences between the problems of the divergent speaker in an isolated rural community where a single dialect is the common speech and has been for several generations and the problems of the divergent speaker in the center of one of our great cities. This latter child may live in a virtual ghetto, but his friends and neighbors represent a variety of language backgrounds. Transplanted regional dialects become social class dialects. As the city-dweller grows older he comes into increasing contact with the general culture and its language. In the home community the idiolects, the personal languages of individuals, will cluster closely around a dialect prototype. But the dialects of urban divergent speakers are much more varied and shade off from distinct divergent dialects to standard speech. Variables such as family origin, recency of migration, degree of isolation from influences outside the subculture, attitudes toward self, personal and parental goals are some of the factors which may determine idiolect.

### *Divergent Languages or Dialects*

Language diversity among divergent speakers complicates the task of understanding the literacy problems which they have. The basic problems will be the same but the specific form and degree will vary among individuals.

Teachers need to give careful consideration to the separate characteristics of several kinds of language divergence. They need to first differentiate immature language from dialect-based divergence. Language which is immature is always in transition toward adult norms. Teachers need not worry too much about immaturity in language since desired change is virtually inevitable. On the other hand whatever the teacher does to speed this change is in the direction the child is moving. He can confirm the teacher's advice in the speech of his parents. But if the teacher "corrects" the dialect-based divergent language, this is at cross purposes with the direction of growth of the child. All his past and present language experience contradicts what the teacher tells him. School becomes a place where people talk funny and teachers tell you things about your language that aren't true.

Another point that needs to be clarified is the difference between standard regional speech and some imaginary national standard which is correct everywhere and always. No dialect of American English ever has achieved this status; instead we have a series of standard regional dialects, the speech of the cultured people in each area.

It's obvious that a teacher in Atlanta, Georgia, is foolish to try to get her children to speak like cultured people in Detroit or Chicago, just as it's foolish for any teacher to impose universal standard pronunciations which are not even present in the teacher's own speech. I'm referring to such hypocricies as insisting that *u* before *e* must always say its own name and therefore *Tuesday* is /Tyuzdey/. Cultured speech, socially preferred, is not the same in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Baltimore, Atlanta, or Chicago. The problem, if any, comes when the Bostonian moves to Chicago, the New Yorker to Los Angeles, the Atlantan to Detroit. Americans are ethnocentric in regard to most cultural traits but they are doubly so with regard to language. Anybody who doesn't speak the way I do is wrong. A *green onion* is not a *scallion*. I live in Detróit not Détroit. I can carry my books to work but not my friends. *Fear* ends with an *r* and *Cuba* does not. Such ethnocentrisms are unfortunate among the general public. They may be tragic among educators. Too often we send children off to speech correction classes not because their speech needs correction but because it isn't like ours. Pity the poor child who finds himself transplanted to a new and strange environment and then must handle the additional complication of learning to talk all over again. And, of course, if the child is a migrant from the rural South to the urban North, his speech marks him not only as different but socially inferior. He is told not just that he is wrong but sloppy, careless, vulgar, crude. His best defense is to be silent.

In his classroom the divergent speaker finds several kinds of language being used. First is the language or bundle of idiolects within dialects which he and his classmates bring with them as individuals. Represented in their language or dialect is the language or dialect of their parents and their speech community. Next there is the language of the teacher which will exist in at least two forms. There will be the teacher's informal, unguarded idiolect and his version of correct standard speech; the way he says things off guard; the way he strives to speak as a cultivated person. Another version of the standard language will be the literary form or forms the child encounters in books. To this we must add the artificial language of the basal reader. Artificial language is not used by anyone in any communicative situation. Some primerese is artificial to the point of being nonlanguage, not even a divergent one.

### *The Consensus of Language and the Uniformity of Print*

Two things are in the divergent child's favor. First, all speakers have a range of comprehension which extends beyond the limits of their own dialect. All of us can understand speech which differs from our own, particularly if we are in frequent contact with such speech. As they grow older, urban children are in increasing contact with a number of dialects other than their own. Secondly, the English orthography has one great virtue in its uniformity across dialects. No matter how words are pronounced printers across the the country usually spell them the same. Though we get some mavericks like *guilty* and *judgment* we spell *pumpkin* the same whether we say *pəŋkin* or *pəmpkən* and *something* the same whether we say *səmpthin* or *səmpm*. This standardization of print for a multidialectal speech suggests that part of the problem of learning to read for divergent speakers could be eliminated if teachers let children read in their own dialects and if teachers got rid of the misconception that spelling determines pronunciation. One child asked his teacher how to spell /ræt/. "R-a-t" she said. "No, ma'am" he responded. "I don't mean rat mouse, I mean right now."

### *Points of Divergence Among Dialects*

Now if we examine the areas in which dialects differ we can perhaps shed some light on the barriers divergent readers face. Let us start with sound.

## Sound Divergence

### *Intonation*

Dialects differ in intonation. Perhaps what makes an unfamiliar dialect most difficult to understand is its unexpected pitch, stress, and rhythm. Teachers often complain when they first begin to work with divergent speakers that they can't understand a word. But after a short time they seem to tune in on the right frequency. They catch on to the melody of the dialect. Since intonation is essential in understanding oral language, it is logical to assume that it must be supplied mentally by readers as they read in order for comprehension to take place. How much comprehension is interfered with if the teacher insists on intonation patterns in oral reading which are unnatural to the divergent reader can only be conjectured at this time. But there is no doubt that this is a source of difficulty to some extent.

### *Phonemes*

Phonemes are the significant units of speech sounds which are the symbols of oral language. All American dialects share more or less a common pool of phonemes. But not all dialects use all these phonemes in all the same ways. They pattern differently in different dialects. Since phonemes are really bundles of related sounds rather than single sounds, it is likely that the range of sounds that compose a particular phoneme will vary among dialects. Vowel phonemes are particularly likely to vary. Even within dialects there are some variations. Good examples are words ending in -og, such as /dog/, /fog/, /frog/, /log/; or are they /dɔg/, /fɔg/, /frɔg/, /lɔg/? In my own idiolect I find I say /frɔg/, /fɔg/, /dɔg/, /lɔg/, but I also say /cag/, /bag/, /smag/.

Obviously phonics programs which attempt to teach a relationship between letters and sounds cannot be universally applicable to all dialects. The basic premise of phonics instruction is that by teaching a child to associate the sounds which he hears in oral language with the letters in written language he will be able to sound out words. But a divergent speaker can't hear the sounds of standard speech in his nonstandard dialect because he does not have them or because they occur in different places in his dialect than other dialects. The instruction may be not only inappropriate but confusing. When he reads the lesson he may then be forced to sound out words which are not words in his dialect. To illustrate: Take a child who normally says /də/ rather than /thə/ and /nəfin/ rather than /nəθin/. Teaching him that the digraph <th> represents the first sound in *the* and the medial consonant in *nothing* makes him pronounce words not in his dialect and throws a barrier across his progress in associating sound and print.

### *New Reading Materials and Sound Divergence Among Dialects*

Recent attempts at producing beginning reading materials which have regular one-to-one correspondence between letters and phonemes will not solve this problem and may actually compound it since there will be a tendency for teachers to assume that the matched correspondence of sound and letter is to be uniform throughout the reading materials. For example, they might assume *frog* and *log* to have the same vowel sound and so teach the sounds to be the same when a student might well use /a/ as in *father* in one and /ɔ/ as in *caught* in the other. The matched phonemic-graphemic books assume that there is a uniform spoken set of sounds that can by ingenuity and counting of data be inscribed with a uniform written alphabet. This is not true, when the spoken language is viewed as a national-international phenomenon or when it is viewed as a local phenomenon in a heterogeneous cultural country as one of our urban centers.

Transcription of the sound language in ITA faces the same problems. It has a wider alphabet and can therefore transcribe more literary and sensible English than the limited lexicon of the American linguistic readers. The British ITA materials, however, cannot be read literally except with the "received pronunciation" of the BBC. When as an American I read about "levers" in an ITA book I must say /liyverz/. The principle that spelling is the same across dialects is sacrificed and ITA spelling requires pronunciation narrowed to one special class dialect. Teachers using these materials need to make some adjustments for the dialects used by themselves and their students. There may be, no doubt is, a spoken language in common but it is not so uniform as is the common spelling system.

Another place where sound divergence among dialects affects the handling of reading materials is the traditional sets of homophones. Homophones, words that sound alike, will vary from dialect to dialect. *Been* and *bin* are homophones in my speech. In another dialect *been* would sound the same as *bean* and in still another *Ben* and *been* would be sounded alike.

Bidialectal students may bring up new sets of homophones. One teacher asked her class to use *so* in a sentence. "I don't mean sew a dress," she said. "I mean the other so." "I got a *so* on my leg," responded one of her pupils.

## Grammar Divergence

### *The Suffix*

Inflectional changes in words involve using suffixes or internal changes in words to change case or tense. In certain dialects of American English speakers say *He see me* rather than *He sees me.* They are not leaving off an *s*. There isn't any in their dialect. Similarly, plurals may not use an *s* form. *I got three brother* is common in Appalachian speech. One teacher reported to me that her pupils could differentiate between *crayon* and *crayons* as written words and respond to the difference by selecting plural and singular illustrations, but they read the words the same, one crayon, two /kraeyən/. The problem is not an inability to see or say the *s*. It doesn't seem to belong in the pronunciation of *crayons*. The inflectional ending *s* to indicate plural is not in the grammar of this dialect.

Most Americans will add /əz/ to form plurals of words ending in /s/ /z/ /š/ /ž/ /č/ as in *busses, mazes, washes, colleges, churches,* but in the Blue Ridge Mountains this ending also goes with words ending in /sp/, /st/, /sk/ as in /waspəz/ /pohstəz/ /tæskəz/ (H. A. Gleason, *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p. 62). This kind of difference will be reflected in the child's reading. The differences are systematic within the child's dialect. In terms of the school and teacher they may be divergent, or as we say, incorrect, but in terms of the reader and his speech community they are convergent, that is, correct.

Not only suffixes vary, but also verb forms and verb auxiliaries. When a child says, "I here teacher," as the teacher calls the roll he is not being incomplete. No linking verb is needed in this type of utterance in his dialect. There is a difference in the syntax of his dialect and other American English dialects. Fortunately such differences are minor in American English. One area of difference seems to be the use of verb forms and verb makers. *We was going, They done it, We come home* all are examples of this phenomenon.

### *Vocabulary Divergence*

An area of dialect divergence that people are most aware of is vocabulary. Most people are aware that *gym shoes* in Detroit are *sneakers* in New York, that in Chicago you may *throw* but in Little Rock you *chunk*, that a Minnesota *lake* would be a *pond* in New Hampshire. Perhaps there is less awareness of words which have similar but not identical meanings in different dialects. All words have a range of meaning rather than a single meaning. This range may shift from place to place. The meaning of *carry* may be basically the same in two dialects but some uses will be correct in one dialect but not in the other.

Vocabulary differences among dialects may cause reading difficulty and must be compensated for by the teacher who uses texts printed for a national market.

I've dealt primarily here with the barriers to learning how to read that result when the readers have divergent languages. There are of course other important problems which grow out of the differences in experience, values, and general subculture of the divergent learners. Readers can't comprehend materials which are based on experience and concepts outside their background and beyond their present development.

### *The Reading Program for Divergent Speakers*

Let's address ourselves to a final question. What is currently happening as the divergent speaker learns to read? I've found that divergent speakers have a surprising tendency to read in book dialect. In their oral reading they tend to use phonemes that are not the ones they use in oral language. Their reading often sounds even more wooden and unnatural than most beginners. There is some tendency to read their own dialect as they gain proficiency, but in general it appears that teachers are more successful in teaching preferred pronunciations than reading. What is lacking is the vital link between written and oral language that will make it possible for children to bring their power over the oral language to bear on comprehending written language.

There seem to be three basic alternatives that schools may take in literacy programs for divergent speakers. First is to write materials for them that are based on their own dialect, or rewrite standard materials in their dialect. A second alternative is to teach the children to speak the standard dialect before teaching them to read in the standard dialect. The third alternative is to let the children read the standard materials in their own dialect, that is to accept the language of the learners and make it their medium of learning. The first alternative seems to be impractical on several counts. Primarily the opposition of the parents and the leaders in the speech community must be reckoned with. They would reject the use of special materials which are based on a nonprestigious dialect. They usually share the view of the general culture that their speech is not the speech of cultivation and literature. They want their children to move into the general culture though they are not sure how this can be brought about.

The second alternative is impractical on pedagogical grounds in that the time required to teach children who are not academically oriented to another dialect of the language, which they feel no need to learn, would postpone the teaching of reading too long. Many would never be ready to learn to read if readiness depended on losing their speech divergence in the classroom. The problem is not simply one of teaching children a new dialect. Children, the divergent among them, certainly have facility in language learning. The problem involves the extinction of their existing dialect, one which receives continuous reinforcement in basic communications outside of the classroom. Labov's research in New York indicates that divergent speakers do not seem to make a conscious effort to use language forms which they recognize as socially preferred until adolescence. Younger children may hear differences but lack the insight to realize which forms are socially preferred. Of course, teenagers may deliberately avoid preferred forms, too, as they reject adult ways and adult values.

In essence the child who is made to accept another dialect for learning must accept the view that his own language is inferior. In a very real sense, since this is the language of his parents, his family, his community, he must reject his own culture and himself, as he is, in order to become something else. This is perhaps too much to ask of any child. Even those who succeed may carry permanent scars. The school may force many to make the choice between self respect and school acceptance. And all this must be accomplished on the faith of the learner that by changing his language he will do himself some good. As one teenager remarked to me, "Ya man, alls I gotta do is walk right and talk right and they gonna make me president of the United States."

The only practical alternative I feel is the third one. It depends on acceptance by the school and particularly by the teacher of the language which the learner brings to school. Here are some key aspects of this approach:

1. Literacy is built on the base of the child's existing language.
2. This base must be a solid one. Children must be helped to develop a pride in their language and confidence in their ability to use their language to communicate their ideas and express themselves.
3. In reading instruction the focus must be on learning to read. No attempt to change the child's language must be permitted to enter into this process or interfere with it.
4. No special materials need to be constructed but children must be permitted, actually encouraged, to read the way they speak. Experience stories must basically be in their language.
5. Any skill instruction must be based on a careful analysis of their language.
6. Reading materials and reading instruction should draw as much as possible on experiences and settings appropriate to the children. While special dialect based materials are impractical, we may nonetheless need to abandon our notion of universally usable reading texts and use a variety of materials selected for suitability for the particular group of learners.
7. The teacher will speak in her own natural manner and present by example the general language community, but the teacher must learn to understand and accept the children's language. He must study it carefully and become aware of the key elements of divergence that are likely to cause difficulty. Langston Hughes has suggested an apt motto for the teacher of divergent speakers: "My motto as I live and learn, is dig, and be dug in return."

My own conviction is that even after literacy has been achieved future language change cannot come about through the extinction of the native dialect and the substitution of another. I believe that language growth must be a growth outward from the native dialect, an expansion which eventually will encompass the socially preferred forms but retain its roots. The child can expand his language as he expands his outlook, not rejecting his own subculture but coming to see it in its broader setting. Eventually he can achieve the flexibility of language which makes it possible for him to communicate easily in many diverse settings and on many levels.

I'd like to close with a plea. You don't have to accept what I've said. I don't ask that you believe or that you agree with my point of view. My plea is that you listen to the language of the divergent. Listen carefully and objectively. Push your preconceptions and your own ethnocentrisms aside and listen. I think that you'll find beauty and form and a solid base for understanding and communication. And as you dig you'll find that you are indeed dug in return.

JUNE BYERS

# Using Poetry to Help Educationally Deprived Children Learn Inductively

If, as Gretchen Wulfing (13) says, there is no child who does not respond to poetry, and if, as Helen M. Robinson (10: 14) says, the so called "culturally different" child tends to learn more readily by inductive than by deductive approaches, then is it possible for a teacher to take advantage of children's natural liking for poetry to help children who are deficient in the language skills necessary for success in school to learn inductively to be better readers, speakers, and writers through daily participation in choral verse work?

I think the answer may be yes. On the basis of admittedly limited experimentation, I have observed that such practice has a tendency to help children to: (1) increase their feeling for and knowledge of the intonation of our language, (2) expand their vocabularies, (3) use context clues, (4) read for meaning, and (5) become more skillful in using oral and written language.

I base these assertions on the following experience. For some time I have been using poetry in a very short and on the whole enjoyable reading lesson with my fifth- and sixth-grade remedial reading pupils. I keep the lesson short because my children are restless and have a short attention span. Even though May Hill Arbuthnot (1: 166) warns against using poetry for the teaching of reading, I justify my action on the grounds that my method is not that of the traditionally oriented reading lesson wherein new vocabulary is introduced, children read silently, and then answer questions from the teacher or otherwise interpret what they have read. Instead, I provide each child with what the children have come to call "our poem of the day" and then I read it to them, asking only that they try to follow the lines and phrases with their eyes. After that we read the poem together. At times my pupils read in parts, asking and answering questions as in "Pictures" (4: 103). At other times they read solo lines as in "Old Roger" (4: 52). Sometimes, however, they want to read the entire poem. Thus, for example "Poor Old Lady" (11: 231) was one poem all fifteen pupils insisted on doing *en masse.* Though fully aware that May Hill Arbuthnot (1: 191) has pointed out that this is the hardest type of choral reading, the children were so carried away that I did not even try to stop them.

Sometimes this is all we do with a poem. It's just for fun. But whether the children realize it or not, they have had a reading lesson. They have heard, seen, and for the most part have spoken the sentences correctly phrased. I feel I have achieved aim number one of the above goals. I find validation for this claim in the words of Donald Lloyd (5: 51): "It (reading instruction) should rest heavily on intonation and the students should be provided with intonation contours rather than be permitted to puzzle out their own."

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On certain occasions, after we read, there might be a short and seemingly off-hand lesson in vocabulary development. Here is an illustration: Following the reading of "Buffalo Dusk" (2: 57), I wrote on the board the word *pawed.* I covered the *ed* and asked the class to read the root word which they all knew. Then we had a very short discussion about what had happened to the meaning of a word which the children usually thought of as the foot of a cat or dog. We discovered more words could be changed in meaning by the addition of *ed.* They offered *knife, curtain, needle, bottle, eye* and many others.

An excellent example of this type of lesson is offered in *Children and Books* (1: 170), wherein May Hill Arbuthnot gives a detailed description of how to develop vocabulary with the poem "Dogs and Weather" (2: 86).

Another example of vocabulary building was our use of the poem "I Like Noise" (4: 161). There was an enthusiastic response to the reading of the poem and the children quickly located all the words depicting noise. Later I wrote the vocabulary words on a chart for the bulletin board. I expect to be able to repeat this type of experience many times, for poetry abounds in sensory images and we should be able to collect words that tell of taste, smell, color, *etc.*

In summary, I am led to believe that poetry will help my children expand their vocabularies, which is my aim number two.

On some days my aim is the third one listed in my introduction. I want to help my children use context clues, to become the good readers Constance McCullough (7: 225) describes when she says: "We recognize that the good reader not only observes words carefully if necessary, but also thinks of the relationship of these words to each other and to the sense of the whole." Here is an example of how I proceed. When I read to the children "The Camel's Lament" (11: 37) I omitted the word *bestraddle.*

People would laugh if you rode a giraffe
Or mounted the back of an ox;
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit
Or try to *bestraddle* a fox.
But as for a camel, he's
Ridden by families—
Any load does for me.

I asked the children if anybody could read the word *bestraddle* as I wrote it on the board, but no one could. I asked if they could guess what it meant and they were able to do that. We talked of what there was in the poem making it possible for them to know the meaning of this word. Then for the first time I pronounced the new word, they repeated it after me, and we read the poem straight through. I think the children relished their new word as they rolled it over their tongues. All this took less time for us to do than for me to write about it, but I claim the children had had a lesson in using one type of context clue. Constance McCullough defines other types in *Elementary English Review* (8 and 9).

In addition to my pointing out how to use context clues, there is probably more of this process taking place with each individual child thinking inductively as we read.

To help children read for meaning, aim number four, I used "Crazy Horse" (3: 74) and "Clipper Ships and Captains" (3: 73). The sentences are simple and straightforward with few obscure words or meanings. Through hearing a poem and reading it aloud in unison, the meaning emerges for we have read in thought units, not simply naming word after word as my children are in the habit of doing. For example, during the short discussion following the reading of "Crazy Horse" it was clear that the children knew who won the fight between the

Indians and the soldiers and why, though it was not explicitly stated in the poem. I am saying that the proper phrasing, rhythm, and intonation with which we read brought the children to understand inductively what they had read. This they have not been able to do for themselves.

And now I come to point number five, that is, poetry helps children talk and write better than they do without such a background. If, after reading a poem, there seems to be no interest in what the poem has to say or how the children feel about it, we drop it and go on to the next activity. I never try to force any discussion. On the other hand, if the pupils seem to want to talk about their reactions, then we talk and sometimes we write.

Each child has a loose-leaf notebook made of bright construction paper in which he collects the stories I have typed for him, either from handwritten work or from stories dictated into the tape recorder. Here are some examples: After reading "Indian Children" (2: 52), we talked briefly about how strange it was to ponder the fact that at the very spot where our classroom is, there may have been an Indian village. How different now! Our school is located on a very busy avenue, so we walked down to the end of our playground to take a look at what may have been an Indian trail in years gone by. Upon our return to the room, they wrote:

> Today Mrs. Byers took us to look at San Pablo Avenue. And I saw a 55 Chevy. It had mag rims* and moons* on it. And I saw a car wash and a parking lot.
>
> Instead of Indians and prowling bears today on San Pablo Avenue, there is a Mobile Station, a Mayflower truck and an auto wash and a school and a ball house and policemen. And there is the sun and the moon and stars and skates and apples and umbrellas and flowers and kites and fighting dogs and butterflies and trees and cats and the library lady.
>
> In 1763 on San Pablo, there were no cars or buses or houses or streets. People had to walk on trails and pastures. There were Indians living there. They would wash in dirty water. They did not like to take a bath.
>
> In 1963 there are streets and buses and stores. And there are houses. We go to school on San Pablo Avenue and teachers teach us. There is a car wash and a Mobile Station.

This admittedly is below fifth- or sixth-grade level writing, but it shows more thought and organization than previous writings.

On the Monday following President Kennedy's death, I read Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" (12: 271), and then we talked and talked and talked. I made no assignment to write, but in the free choice period my pupils wrote:

> President Kennedy was a very good men. He was killed on November 22, 1963. He was a very good President to all of us. We have a new President now and his name is President Johnson.
>
> I am very sorry that President Kennedy is dead. He was our youngest President. And he was our 35th President. We all loved him. I'm sure of that. Mrs. Kennedy is sad and so are we.
>
> Dear Mrs. Kennedy,
>
> I am sorry that President Kennedy was shot in the head. And I am sorry that he was buried on his son's birthday. And I am sorry that he did not live to see Thanksgiving. But I hope you and Caroline and John John have a nice Thanksgiving. My name is Shirley Ardds.
>
> Dear Mrs. Kennedy,
>
> I feel the same way you do. Look up to Heaven and smile for God is near and do not fear. That is all for now.
>
> Your friend,
> Gus Glass
>
> Lee Oswald was accused of killing John F. Kennedy, our President. And Jack Ruby killed Lee Oswald. Ruby was the judge and jury and executioner.

Again, this writing is much below the

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*Special terms used by teenagers to define ornate hub caps.

expected grade level, but for children of this choronological age, it is writing which is coherent and honest.

On the day before Thanksgiving we read "Thanksgiving Day" (11: 278). We had much to talk about for the minds of these boys and girls were naturally filled with thoughts of what the next day would bring. So we used the tape recorder. Here are a few lines which my children dictated:

> On Thanksgiving all my cousins and uncles and aunties are coming over and we're going to have turkey, dressing, salad, and hot peppers. And after that my cousins and I are going outside to play and we might go riding.

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> My name is Nasario Martinez. Today is November 27, 1963. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving and my mother is going to the store and buy us some corn. And then we're going to go to the meat market and buy some pig head so we can make some tamales. And we're going to have a twelve pound turkey and we're going to have some potato chips and we're going to have barbecue. My mother says we might eat outside. That's all.

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> On Thanksgiving we're going to have a big turkey and after we get through having our turkey we're going to go to Palo Alto. We're going to see our cousins and go ride on horses. And when we get back, we're going to see my grandmother. We're going to have a big old Thanksgiving.

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The ramblings and false starts and backtrackings which formerly appeared when the children used the tape recorder are on the wane. These pupils are beginning to be able to use oral language more effectively. Dr. Walter Loban (6) says, "Competence in the spoken language appears to be basic for competence in reading and writing." I think my pupils are gaining a little in acquiring such competence.

I recently heard remarks made by several speakers that strengthen my conviction that choral verse work may be one of the paths to literacy for my children. I heard Frank Rice say, as he explained the Nebraska Curriculum for English, that continued exposure to the best in children's literature would refine a child's sensitivity to language. I heard Lawrence Carrillo of San Francisco State College say that teaching language and reading are inseparable and that such learning takes place when a child has sustained, continuing contact with literary works of merit. And I heard Madeleine L' Engle say that as a child she had learned many new words from her wide reading experience.

It must be conceded that there is no conclusive evidence to substantiate my claim that choral verse work helps children learn inductively. I merely point out that such practice may be effective in helping those children whose language patterns differ from the ones used in our schools. Further experimentation is needed before making any conclusions.

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LILA SHEPPARD

# Talk Written Down

When I went to New Zealand on a Fulbright Exchange I was given a class of 41 five-year-olds and told, "We teach them to read at five." I managed to look unruffled while the headmaster explained that each child is exposed to reading as soon as he enters school on his fifth birthday, on the assumption that naturally he'll learn to read as soon as he writes.

Under the extremely able guidance of the infant mistress I managed to come up to expectations. And after six months I came away feeling slightly dazed at the ease with which 33 of my 41 youngsters were reading—at 33 levels, of course.

I've used the writing method of teaching reading in remedial work as described by Grace Fernald in "Techniques in Remedial Reading," and I have my fourth graders write a great deal. Now I keep asking, since we know that self-education is the best education, and that reading is talk written down, why do we impose reading processes on children rather than drawing out from their own resources? As one second grader put it, "Teaching is when *you* want me to know something; learning is when *I* want to know something."

## How to Start Beginners

### *With the Class*

1. *Morning visiting time* is ideal for dramatizing talk written down. Have the easel ready with a sheet of 18x24 paper. Select one story told by a child that all were interested in, and say, "Let's write Jimmy's story. Jimmy, please tell us again."

As Jimmy tells, you print, saying each word as you print. Then say, "There! We have Jimmy's talk written down. Let's read it." And you move your hand along under the writing as the children read.

2. *Integrate Activities.* A free activity hour is essential for individual development. The materials are those of any well-stocked kindergarten—playhouse, blocks, puzzles, sand and water play, cuisinaire, paint, clay, *etc.*

You set up centers of interest with such signs as, NUMBER TABLE, READING TABLE, NATURE TABLE, CUTTING AND PASTING TABLE, WRITING AND DRAWING TABLE. The children gravitate toward their interests, and you can keep track of what each one does from day to day.

With free use of these materials, each child develops skills. He develops his personality. He uses all mediums of communication with other children. He learns the social limits of behavior in order to get along with the others. He has plenty to think about, talk about, write about, and read about.

Excursions, science, social studies, number work—all activities enrich his reading as new experiences build and expand his vocabulary.

3. *Make Your Own Books.* You can give your classwork unity by having a *theme of the week*—not rigid, but a track to run on if ideas are scarce. A theme helps children follow a line of thought, and develop new ideas and new vocabulary. Some sugges-

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tions: my family, my pets, our house, things that go, or a class trip to the grocery store.

Each day you write a story on the theme, with the class, using 12x18 paper. One child illustrates the story and you hang it up to be saved for the *Weekly Book.* At the end of the week or theme, tie the pages together, make a cover and title. Read it together, as you underline with your hand. Hang the books on low pegs so the children can help themselves as they wish to read. Some possible titles: *Days of The Week, Zoo Animals, Trees on Our Playground, Songs We Sing, Numbers We Know.*

4. *Read-Aloud Books and Charts.* Of course you will read and read and read to your children. Sometimes you read picture books just for looking and listening. Nursery rhymes, poems, and finger plays are learned by rote, then played, dramatized, or pantomimed.

Familiar *rhymes printed on wall charts* make wonderful reading for beginners. So do the verses of songs they sing. Even though they are memorized, the children get a powerful feeling of reading when they see them in print.

You may use *large print reading books to* demonstrate left-to-right eye movement and smooth phrase reading. Hold the book against your chest, move your hand along as you read, then let the children read back to you. They love this rote reading.

5. *Library Books.* The library rack in your room is prominent from the first day of school. The range should be from picture books, through easy-to-reads, primers, and up to second or third level. The children should have free choice of books, to look at, ask questions about, perhaps ask you to read. If time doesn't permit your reading at the moment, promise to do so at library time. This can be a period set aside for book browsing if the children don't have ample book time during free activity.

Sometimes you might suggest that a youngster take home a book he especially likes. Many fast learners need no more encouragement than this to be able to read books with little assistance. Mom and Dad should know your aim and method so that they understand they are not to put on any pressure.

6. *First Dictionary—Room Signs and Labels.* The familiar technique of labelling should be done while the children watch. You might say, "Watch me write my talk. 'You may paint here.'" Then hang the sign on the easel and let the children read it aloud. Whatever you write, emphasize that you are writing your talk.

In this way the room literally becomes the children's first dictionary. As they begin to copy and write their own stories, help them see that they can find the words they need by going around the room. You'll be surprised at how quickly the faster learners will do this. And they are eager to show the others how.

Very soon a few children will begin to comment on the letters of the alphabet. William says, "Window has the same beginning as my name." So now it's time to display the alphabet. Present a letter or two each day, using one large card for each letter. A single line and picture will do: $\dfrac{\text{a}}{\underline{\text{A}}}$ is for airplane. Or you and the youngsters can make up a rhyme:

$\underline{\text{A}}$
$\underline{\text{a}}$ is for airplane
See it fly!
My jet plane
Can go very high.

You start phonics when some children observe that two words sound alike at the beginning. You simply follow their observation, saying, "Yes, *toy* and *train* start the same. They say *T*. That letter is called *t* in the alphabet. This is big *T* and this is little *t*. Can you find any other words around the room that start with *t*?" Matching sounds quickly becomes a fascinating game with a few children, and the others will catch their interest.

### How to Do It

*With the Individual*

1. *The Art Lesson*. Before the children draw or paint fold up a two-inch strip along the bottom of the paper. "This is a fence. You musn't paint over the fence." When the pictures are finished you let each child tell you about his picture. You print with black crayon exactly what the child says. You read it to him saying, "This is your talk." Then he reads it back to you.

You remark casually, "You may take a black crayon and trace your story if you'd like to." Show him what trace means but don't pressure him to do it.

2. *Blackboard Writing*. Divide the blackboard into sections. Write the children's first names in the sections. They may go to their places and write their names if they wish. Again, no pressure. The last name may be added when the individual is ready. If the child uses his section for drawing, you label his story for him; then encourage him to read, trace, and copy.

3. *Individual Newsbooks*. Each child has a newsbook. This should be about 9x12 unlined paper, and may be purchased or made from drawing paper, newsprint, or wrapping paper. Each day the child draws his personal news. This may be the same as he told at morning news time, or anything else he wishes to draw.

You write his story exactly as he tells it, then help him read it back. Show him how to trace. Very soon many children will not only trace, but try copying below your printing.

Slower starters may have only one word stories—"house" being a favorite. Accept it for a few days, then try a leading question. "Is it your house? Tell me more about your house," or "What happened at your house?" Some children remain in the word and phrase stage for quite some time.

After you've read to the children from books they will usually begin to form sentences. If not, you may need to give some help. But be sure to *get it from the child*—not impose your sentence on him.

Each day the youngster rereads his former stories. He may read to you, to himself, or to a friend. Two or three youngsters, off in a corner swapping news, are experiencing real communication.

Perhaps once a week the newsbooks could go home to be read to Mom and Dad.

4. *Individual Vocabulary Books*. These are optional and may be started if you wish to supplement your program with a basic reader. Wait until you can form a group of children who have progressed to a point of legibly copying their own stories, and of knowing some of their own vocabulary.

The vocabulary books may be dime store notebooks, 6x9 or 8x10, or made from primer paper. The idea is that you print the word to be developed for the day, then print a sentence using that word. Or you may print the word and let each child tell you his sentence. Leave a space on the page so the child can illustrate. Then he traces and copies.

As you develop this reader vocabulary, print the words on a large chart and display it on the wall. It becomes part of your room dictionary.

### Caution! Proceed with Care

You will need to be as sensitive as a Geiger counter in detecting the hidden treasure in your youngsters. And you'll need to guard against using pickaxe methods of drawing out the wealth.

I believe that I had the advantage of acute awareness because I was working in an unfamiliar situation with an unfamiliar age group. At any rate, when I made mistakes, the reactions of the children showed me my errors at once.

I found myself making inane statements such as, "Oh, that's good, Mary!" or "How lovely!" or "Isn't that nice?" Such remarks are quite meaningless, and they tend to put your stamp of approval on some children's work to the exclusion of others. Much better to comment, "I enjoyed reading your story, Anne," or "Your swim in the lake sounds like fun. Are your going again this Sunday?"

Show your interest and enthusiasm, but don't kill a story for a child by belaboring it with questions. If he wants to talk about it, he'll approach you. If you approach him and he doesn't respond, drop it. He has either gone on to something else, or has exhausted his ideas on the subject.

Accept what the child says *as he says it*. Too soon you will notice a discouraging tendency on the part of children to hold back their own spontaneous stories in favor of the stilted sentences of some books. One little boy told such stories as, "That's God watching my Daddy in his truck." But after he had read a primer he said, "This is a truck."

Should you correct errors in grammar? It depends—on the child, the error, and on the way you do it. Better to let a mistake go by than to discourage a child who is slow to express himself. Usually you can say, "'I don't got' doesn't sound quite right. Could you say, 'I don't have?'" Then be sure *he says it* before you print it.

I was fascinated to see how the little ones put their whole bodies into the act of reading. They would sit on the floor with their newsbooks and nod their heads, or rock back and forth as they crooned out the words. Verbalizing, I thought—shouldn't I stop it?

So one day I stopped them and said, "Watch me read silently," and I put on a demonstration of moving eyes and motionless lips.

They obliged with a good imitation. When they finished reading I asked, "What was the story about, Eric?"

Eric answered in surprise, "I don't know. I couldn't hear myself read it." Discovery for me—beginners need to verbalize.

Most of the children pointed as they read. My first thought was, "they shouldn't." But as I watched their body action I thought, "why not?" If it was natural to read with their whole being, then it must be extremely meaningful and satisfying—and that's what we want reading to be. Pointing would stop along with early manifestations of motor learning like rocking, nodding, and verbalizing—when the right time came.

Tracing and copying is motor learning, directly related to the satisfying sense of touch. "Don't touch!" we say. Instead we should be saying, "*Do* touch. Feel this. Pinch, caress, tap, squeeze, cuddle, push—learn through your hands!"

"Don't count on your fingers," we say. In heaven's name, why not? Why are we bent on trying to deprive children of their natural, personal ways of learning?

### Progress Through the Grades

As the child progresses through the grades he should do original writing every day. In checking reading skills and comprehension, his own writing should take precedence over prepared materials such as workbooks and work sheets. How much more valuable are his own thoughts and reactions to the writing of others, than the routine of filling in blanks and answering true-false!

Many teachers find a diary invaluable. It can be secret or shared, and it provides a constant medium of self-expression.

### Valuable Concepts Gained

With the talk written down method of reading, the child does not develop an early fear that he can't read. If he writes, he knows that the words he reads will be the same that he uses himself, so naturally he can read them.

Because this method permits the individual free use of his innate ability, the slow learner, the fast learner, the immature, and the emotionally disturbed can start and proceed at their own pace, without pressure.

Each step taken in language development is a natural one—spelling, punctuation, phonics, dictionary use, various forms of writing—each is learned as a need for self-expression.

The self-confidence that is acquired is a tremendous factor in fluency of communication. Children grasp the concept that what they think about they can write, what they write they can read or let others read. In turn they can listen to the thoughts of others, or read them.

Children grasp the concept of the unity of all language skills. One day I wrote on the board for my fourth graders:

$\begin{cases}\text{talk}\\\text{listen}\end{cases}$ $\begin{cases}\text{write}\\\text{read.}\end{cases}$

I pointed out that these are language twins, and that they can't be separated. After a little discussion, one boy bested me. He said, "Why, they aren't twins—the four of them are quadripples!"

ALLISON DAVIS

# Teaching Language and Reading to Disadvantaged Negro Children

A hopeful young teacher, trained in the theory and methods taught in our best colleges and universities, often has to *begin* her teaching in a school where the majority of the pupils come from disadvantaged Negro families. This is normal central-office procedure in most cities. New teachers are assigned to the schools in the lower socioeconomic neighborhoods because most of the experienced teachers "transfer out" of these lower-class schools as soon as they may. Most of them have found it impossible to understand the pupils of the masses. They have been puzzled by the language of these pupils, by their attitudes toward school work and toward the *teacher;* by their indifference to the curriculum—and in the later grades, by the pupils' sullen resentful behavior. If the experienced teacher flees from these schools, it is a mystery what the central offices *expect* to happen to the *beginning* teacher, who is given her first assignment in a school in a lower socioeconomic area. We know what actually happens to most such new teachers. Going from her college classes on theory and from her sheltered practice teaching into these schools of the masses, the new teacher experiences a cultural shock, a trauma of fear, disillusionment, and frustration from which she only slowly, if ever, recovers. This initiation trauma of the inexperienced, middle-class teacher has been studied at the University of Chicago. The new teacher, who finds most of her college preparation useless in a classroom where her pupils appear to come from a different language world and a world of different values and goals, does actually suffer a period of deep anxiety, resulting from both moral and emotional shock.

In spite of his emotional spontaneity and expressiveness, the Negro child from the low socioeconomic groups is likely to lack confidence in his ability and in his future. His parents usually do not encourage him to compete in school, so that he usually lacks the *drive to achievement,* the prime incentive which middle-class parents seek to teach their children.

Moreover, the school program itself, including the so-called (but incorrectly termed) reading-readiness tests, the educational-aptitude tests, the primers, readers, and the curriculum as a whole soon damage severely the confidence and the basic self-esteem of the Negro or white child from low socioeconomic groups. Finally, his low place in society and that of his parents, friends, and neighbors tends to weaken his self-esteem. This self-depreciation is typical of all low-status groups, and is the result of their having been severely stigmatized in most relationships with dominant groups. It results in a poor self-image for the Negro child and adolescent and in hidden self-contempt beneath the facade of stupidity and resentment.

These children need, most of all, teachers who will encourage them to try, to hope, to

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believe in their futures, and to believe in themselves against the dead weight of the social and economic pressures which drive them down to self-depreciation and sullen resentment.

The chief obstacle to school achievement by the Negro disadvantaged child is his *first-learned culture,* that language and way of life which he already has learned in his family. In school, the child is expected to change the behavior which his own father, mother, and peer group have taught him. He has to learn to speak and understand a new language, "standard" English, and to learn increasingly complex middle-class behavior, with respect to study habits, control of aggression, and sexual values.

For both white and Negro low status groups, the school is one of the most powerful factors in changing their culture. But the schools and our whole educational system are operating at the level of only a half of their potential effectiveness in training these children.

We know, for instance, that a third of the white children of unskilled and semiskilled families in a midwestern city already are retarded in grade placement by the time they are nine and ten years old.[1] By the time white children from these lowest occupational groups are in their tenth year, they are about one year behind the children from the top occupational families in reading, and ten points lower in I.Q. ratings. Negro children of the lowest economic group are about a year behind the white lowest economic group in reading, and six points lower in I.Q. at age ten.[2]

But both groups have improved markedly in the last generation. The average I.Q. of white children of unskilled and semiskilled parents in Chicago is 102.3, actually above the national average for all children.[3] The average I.Q. of Negro children born in Philadelphia, New York, or Chicago is 97.[4] Klineberg and Lee have shown, moreover, that the I.Q.'s of Negro children born in the South improve steadily with length of residence in New York or Philadelphia.[5] This trend is statistically significant and continuous. Such improvement, in an overall measure of educational aptitude, indicates the great power of acculturation, both in the school and in the community, in changing language and cognitive skills.

We need, however, to accelerate the pace of acculturation of these groups in our schools. In presenting a tentative plan for such acceleration, I wish first to consider the relationship between the teacher and the disadvantaged Negro or white child.

It seems clear that the first thing we have to do, if we are to help students improve their attitudes toward themselves and toward the school work, is *to change our attitudes toward them.* If they are to develop hope for their futures and faith in their ability to achieve a useful life, we must have faith in them. No one does anything well in life unless he feels that someone has faith in him and in his ability to achieve.

But it is difficult for teachers to believe in culturally disadvantaged students who are loud and aggressive. These pupils, the teacher learns, are uninterested in the silly and dull primers, in social studies texts or in arithmetic problems unrelated to their lives.

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[1] Kenneth Eells, Allison Davis, Robert J. Havighurst, Virgil E. Herrick, and Ralph W. Tyler, under the chairmanship of Allison Davis, *Intelligence and Cultural Differences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 112.

[2] Robert D. Hess, *An Experimental Culture-Fair Test of Mental Ability,* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Committee on Human Development, the University of Chicago, 1950, p. 97.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[4] Exerett S. Lee, "Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration," *American Sociological Review,* 16 (1951), 231; also Hess, *op. cit.*

[5] Otto Klineberg, *Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1935, p. 59. Also E. S. Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

To stimulate new learning in these pupils, we need first a new relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher will have to initiate this new relationship by trying to understand the student and his strange, stigmatized culture. The teacher must also remember that the processes by which human beings change their behavior (learn) are extremely complex, and are usually slow.

The major principles involved in the student's learning what the teacher has to teach may be stated as follows:

1. All learning is stimulated or hindered by the teacher's feelings toward the student. They must trust and have faith in each other.
2. All school learning is influenced by the cultural attitudes which the teacher has toward the student, and which the student experiences toward the teacher. Often in rejecting the student's cultural background, the teacher appears to reject the student himself, as a human being. In return, and as early as the first grade, the student may reject the culture of the school, and of the teacher. Both teacher and pupil must learn to *respect* the ability and position of the other.
3. All school learning is influenced by the degree of interest and drive with respect to schoolwork which the student has learned in his family and peer group.
4. All school learning is influenced by the presence, or absence, of intrinsic motivation in the curriculum itself. Neither the teacher nor the student can create interest in dull, unrealistic texts in reading, social studies, or arithmetic.

### *Suggestions for Improving the Teaching of Language and Other Cognitive Processes to Disadvantaged Negro Children*

These proposals are designed both (1) to increase the familiarity of the child with cultural objects and symbols and, at the same time, (2) to increase the child's desire to learn in school.

(A) All authorities on this subject have agreed that the school behavior of children from the Negro or white lower economic groups is characterized by:

1. Their relative lack of attention to the problem as a whole, and its details. In research on an individual test of problem-solving ability conducted by Robert D. Hess and myself, we were struck by the fact that, *in the test situation*, the average six-year-old child from the Negro low economic groups looked out of the window or at the pictures on the wall, or sat passively, while the average middle-class child asked questions about what was expected of him, handled the toys and other test materials, and repeatedly asked whether he had made the correct response. The "lack of attention" by low economic groups is a cultural factor, and is related to their lack of identification with the school, its activities, and its teachers.

2. Their lack of apparent interest in and desire to learn the school activities and tasks.

3. Their lack of competitive drive and confidence with respect to achieving in the classroom, and

4. Their relatively poor work habits.

As stated in my reports of research in testing both low and middle socioeconomic groups of white and Negro children, the lack of attention and of desire to learn and to compete in school, on the part of the low-income groups, result in part from their cultural handicap. They discover at the very beginning of their school life that they do not know many objects, words, pictures, and concepts which many of the other (middle class) children know.

An equally powerful deterrent to achievement, however, is their fear and distrust of the school and the teacher, which constitute an alien environment, and their failure to identify with the stranger (the teacher) and her behavior. The so-called "lack" of attention, "lack" of desire to learn, and "lack" of competitive drive in school are expressions of urgent realities: of fear and feelings of inadequacy, and the consequent resentment toward the teacher and the school tasks.

The primary emphasis in the kindergarten and the primary grades, therefore, should be placed upon the establishment of a strong relationship of trust and mutual acceptance between the teacher and pupil. The first step in education is to train the pupil to like the teacher. If he likes the teacher, he will later learn to *respect* the teacher and *will want to win her approval.* It is generally true that middle-class children have this positive feeling for the teacher (in spite of frequent parental criticism of their teachers). The feeling of liking for the teacher develops into respect and the desire to win her approval. It is just this step which is missing in the early school life of most Negro children from low socioeconomic groups, and which must be built-in at the preschool and primary level. Enjoyable informal activities, such as story-reading and games; the child's freedom to tell his *own stories* about his *own* life or fantasies, in whatever words he knows, together with songs, dances, and little plays can establish a bridge between the culture of the teacher and that of the low-status child.

Across this bridge the teacher can lead the child into new learning and new behavior, into a new world of letters, numbers, and writing which now become invested with the importance and the feeling which the child attaches to the teacher, and to *whatever she values.* From the good relationship with the teacher comes interest in the school, in the materials, and even in the workbooks. It is this spark, struck by the relationships with the teacher, which illuminates and enlivens the world of the mind even in the first grade. Therefore we need to bring the Negro and white child from low economic groups into a relationship with such a teacher as early as possible, and to structure this relationship as rewarding to both pupil and teacher.

(B) The courageous and effective teacher will shift from the so-called "basic reader" program. In this rigid program, the goals are simply (1) decoding these materials, and (2) doing so at a certain pace. The materials in these primers and readers, however, exert little or no intrinsic stimulation upon Negro or white children from culturally disadvantaged groups. These stories arouse neither imaginative nor dramatic interest. As we know, the pupils come to the first grade unprepared for the language environment of the classroom, and for most of the other cultural demands and activities of the school.

As a result, we find in the low-income schools and in the central city schools a conflict between the culturally alienated pupils, who can find nothing appealing, meaningful or exciting in the primers and readers, and the teacher who finds it impossible to succeed, or to maintain the required pace, using materials which inherently are lacking in fantasy, exciting action, emotional appeal, and the other qualities which children enjoy.

The problem, however, is not merely to replace one set of primers and readers with another, which merely change minor aspects of the pictures, and use the same uninteresting situations with the postman (who seldom has any letters for the slum family) or with the milkman (who never delivers milk to these homes since it costs three to four cents more a quart, when delivered).

The problem is, first, to help these children learn to speak and understand oral English in the kindergarten and the primary, so as to learn to understand the language of the teacher. To be effective, the teaching of reading must begin with the teaching of English vocabulary and usage, both in the kindergarten and primary. Teachers of reading and of kindergarten must learn to become teachers of speech. They should specialize in the field of children's speech, and have had some training in the use of the phonetic techniques and equipment familiar to teachers of speech, and of a foreign language.

The time is here when the obsession with reading in the first three grades—the reading of nonsense in the primers and readers—an obsession which has contributed to the retardation of Negro and other disadvantaged children by two whole years when they have been in school less than six years—has been recognized as a waste of time and money in vast amounts. Speaking and understanding spoken language come first. The basic language is the spoken language, as linguists agree. Kindergarten through third grade will increasingly emphasize the teaching of speech, which results in a much more rapid learning of both vocabulary and syntax.

Secondly, in addition to shifting the emphasis from the visual to the oral and auditory language in the first three grades, the kindergarten and primary must devote far more time to helping children learn to think, that is to guide cognitive (intellectual) development. Learning to think, as the great student of language, Edward Sapir, wrote, is a more basic process than learning to use language. *Thinking* precedes expression. Language is only the clothing of thought. Learning to think, as I pointed out in *Social-Class Influences upon Learning*, many years ago at Harvard, is the prime goal of early education. The child is in school, first of all, to learn how to think; that is to learn to observe, to perceive; to recognize relationships, differences and similarities between his observations; and to make inferences which we regard as reasonable.

The basic changes in the education of the disadvantaged Negro or white child, therefore, will be the same as those in good education generally. First, children have to learn to understand and to speak language before they can read it well or intelligently. Speech training and learning to understand speech will come before reading. Secondly, much more time will be given to learning to observe, to classify, to discriminate between observations, to reason, and to engage in expressive verbal activities than will be given to the rigid, outmoded textbook method. Elsewhere, the writer is publishing cognitive, emotional, and social criteria for the development of sequences, and materials in the field of speech and reading.

(C) With regard to methods for teaching language:

(a) Pictures, objects, stories, and television shows are to be used to develop interest on the part of the child in learning to identify and name objects, animals, groups, *etc.*, and to raise and explore problems. The teacher approves his interests and efforts, and supplies words to name objects or describes experiences, but she does not show him how to solve a problem unless he has exhausted his own approaches.

(b) With regard to the learning of language, objects, slides, and pictures should be used just as they are by good foreign-language teachers to make clear the meaning of a new word. The child's slum dialect word may be incomprehensible to the teacher. This makes no difference, for the child will learn the teacher's (standard English) word for it, when she gives him practice in naming the object as she does. This method will apply only to nouns and to those verbs, adverbs, and prepositions which may be illustrated by moving objects. The use of pictures and of slides also will help arouse the child's interest in identifying and naming objects, animals, and categories of people and of actions.

(c) After the child has a basic group of words and concepts, he is ready for narrative. By far the most powerful stimulus to his desire to learn concepts, experiences, and words is the story. The story enables him to extend his experience of nature and people vicariously, and gives him the language of action which is far more interesting to him at this age than the language of categories, description, or exposition.

Stories may be presented (1) through the teacher's telling (or reading) those appropriate to this development stage, (2) through the acting, singing, or dancing out of nursery rhymes and simple stories like "The Three Bears " or "The King and the Dairy Maid" by the children themselves, and (3) through "children's programs" on television, records, tapes, or radio. The use made of the stories, like that made of the identification of objects, models, and pictures, is in encouraging and stimulating the child to talk, to extend his vocabulary and his concepts, and to increase the complexity of his thinking and verbalization of relationships.

For the inservice education of teachers, I should suggest, in addition, the following steps:

(1) *Study of the school's community.* The young teacher, just out of college, usually knows nothing about the actual values, motives, and feelings of the lower socioeconomic community. Teachers may learn these facts by individual case studies or by informal talks with the pupils in their classes. Or the faculty, as a whole, may cooperate in a study, using census data on the community, and questionnaires and interviews with parents and students.

(2) *Inservice training of teachers.* All success in improving schools depends upon the willingness of teachers to learn from each other. To improve any aspect of teaching or learning in the school, the administration must provide for serious in-service training of teachers. Groups of teachers should analyze their own classroom experiences, the problems which they have met in their daily work. For any of the problems I have mentioned, there is no effective start toward a solution without the participation of the majority of the most influential teachers in prolonged in-service training programs.

(3) *Reading.* Here is an exciting opportunity for the sensitive, alert, and constructive teacher: (a) In learning the real interests and experiences of children and adolescents, and (b) in selecting stories and reading materials in the social studies and in psychology which will meet these interests. New reading materials of this realistic, exciting kind will not come usually from college and university professors. They will come chiefly from classroom teachers who are in daily contact with children and adolescents. Any alert teacher can find such stories or materials and test their value by use with her classes.

(4) *The curriculum.* What I have said of reading applies to the content of the rest of the curriculum. New materials in literature, the social studies, home economics, and even mathematics, which deal with both life and fantasy, as the pupils know it, are

greatly needed, but I have seen few texts which have interest for students. Only school staffs who know children and adolescents, their interests and communities, can select these new curricular materials. Let us have the eyes to observe our students, the interest to use our observations in finding pertinent materials, and the courage to use them in experimental dittoed form, as a part of classroom work. We have had thirty years of talk about a new curriculum. Where is the new curriculum? We want to develop it, and write it—not talk about it.

(5) *Teaching method.* Discussion and participation: this is another field in which much has been said and little done. We need a method by which the students of all groups, and all socioeconomic levels will be drawn into classroom discussions in each subject. At present, the teacher usually fears allowing the low-status students to talk freely; she is afraid of their English, or of the subjects they raise out of real life, or of her own reactions. But the best classes I have seen in the hundreds of schools I have visited have been those in which there was free discussion.

The process of cultural learning which is raising the hopes and lifting the aspirations of the Negro masses in America cannot be stopped, although it is being impeded. Its working is inevitable. It is only in these terms of cultural change that one can begin to understand the tremendous efforts of Negro Americans, after nearly fourteen generations in America, for full participation in the educational, economic, political, and cultural life of the United States.

In this highly complex process of acculturation, which operates over decades and generations, some teachers and schools have labored hard, though at times blindly. Teachers have made sacrifices, have given their hearts to their work, but often have been discouraged. Looking at the results of their hard, nerve-wracking work in one class period, or one semester, or one year, they sometimes have felt that their lives have been wasted.

But the sacrifices have not been in vain. Time and work are telling. In just one generation, the I.Q. of Negro children in Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago has increased about ten points. Furthermore, as revealed by Special Monograph, No. 10, Volume 1, on Special Groups, by the Selective Service System (1953, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, p. 147) the Negroes drafted in Illinois and New York had a far lower rate of failure on the educational test used by Selective Services than did the whites in fifteen southern states.

What we, as teachers, must always remember is that man is a learner. No matter how handicapped he may be, he still possesses the highest of human capacities, the ability to improve himself by learning. Given the opportunity, he will learn his way up.

HILDEGARD THOMPSON

# Teaching English to Indian Children

The 1965 meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English held in this particular locale, on a Thanksgiving holiday weekend, provides an unusually appropriate setting for a discussion of the subject, "Teaching English to Indian Children." Here, we are meeting only a short distance from the very spot where in 1620 a group of American Indians was exposed for the first time to the English language; yet today, almost three and one half centuries later, several thousand American Indians speak English only as their second language. Some do not speak it at all. Many of the more than 500,000 Americans who identify themselves as Indians on census rolls are strangers to most other Americans. They are strangers in the very land that was first theirs. If American Indians today are strangers to you, I hope that this discussion on teaching English to Indians will accomplish a second and, perhaps, a more significant purpose; namely, to introduce you to Indians because truly you should know your fellow citizens, the American Indians.

I hope, too, if this is your first introduction to today's Indians, you will not make it a casual acquaintanceship but that you will learn more about Indian life as it is today. This Thanksgiving holiday, elementary-grade children all over America will re-enact the First Thanksgiving in which Indians played a prominent part—which is well and good—but unfortunately for too many of these school children, their exposure to Indians stops with the Thanksgiving story. This leaves them with a "Pilgrim view" of Indians which is seldom appropriately brought up to date in their study of history later on in the grades. Usually their notion of Indians is further warped by the Westerns they read or see, picturing Indians as wild and bloodthirsty savages. Indians today live no more like the corn-planting Squanto than we live like the Pilgrims of Plymouth days. They are no more like the Indians seen in most Westerns than we are like the stagecoach drivers or the villains who robbed the mails.

FRANCIS M. MCKINLEY

*Getting ready to enter school in the fall.*

Scattered throughout this land, living in towns and cities in every state, thousands upon thousands of American Indians live and work like their non-Indian neighbors. Many of them have long since severed their tribal ties; others have not. They can be found in the professions; in business; in trades and industry; in public service; and in the arts. Many have attained distinction in their field: Congressman Reifel, the con-

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Mrs. Thompson was Chief, Branch of Education, Bureau of Indian affairs, U. S. Department of the Interior prior to her retirement in 1965. This paper was presented at the Fifty-Fifth Annual NCTE Convention in Boston, November, 1965.

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gressman from South Dakota, is a Sioux; Maria Tallchief, the ballerina, is an Osage; William Keeler, vice-president of Phillips Petroleum Company, is a Cherokee; Dr. Edward Dozier, professor of anthropology, is a Pueblo Indian; Annie Wauneka, who received the President's Freedom Medal, is a Navajo. The catalog of famous Indians could go on and on. Others are just ordinary citizens like you and me.

Many of the Indians living and working side by side with the rest of us learned the English language as their second language after they started school. Congressman Reifel's first language, for example, was Sioux which he learned from his Sioux-speaking mother. Last year when we appeared before the Subcommittee on Appropriations of which he is a member, he paid tribute to the teachers in the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the start and encouragement they gave him. Congressman Reifel's command of English would make any teacher proud. Certainly teachers who taught him English as his second language should be doubly proud because he speaks English with distinction.

DONALD J. MORROW

*Librarian helping sixth-grade Sioux students select books in the Bookmobile.*

Although many of the individuals I've been describing had their first exposure to English in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, the Bureau as a rule does not provide educational services for their descendants. Their children and grandchildren attend public and private schools just as do the children of other citizens. Today over two thirds of the Indian school population attend public or church-operated schools. The Bureau does, however, provide educational services for a certain segment of the Indian population—a segment of the reservations' population whose members in the past have lived culturally and geographically isolated from other Americans—who have had limited exposure to modern living —who have been overlooked when educational opportunities were passed out or who refused the opportunities when offered —who have limited, if any, knowledge of English—who lack skills or jobs—who have experienced extreme frustration and failure. It is their children, numbering over 50,000, representing about one third of the Indian school age population, who attend Bureau schools. Not only do these children have English language learning problems, but they have many other learning problems as well. Consequently, all education in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools comes under the category of special education; that is, education specially tailored to the needs of children who must be taught a second language; who must be helped to overcome the scars of poverty and failure; who must be helped to find their way between two cultures. Ours is a compensatory type education—compensatory for the children—but more so for the teachers—because nowhere, yes, I repeat nowhere, can teachers find the challenges and satisfactions to compensate for their hard work that can be found in working with Indian children and youth. What greater satisfaction could any teacher have than to have a student express his feelings and thoughts in words like these:

Pima Land

Out in the sunlit West is the land of the Pima.

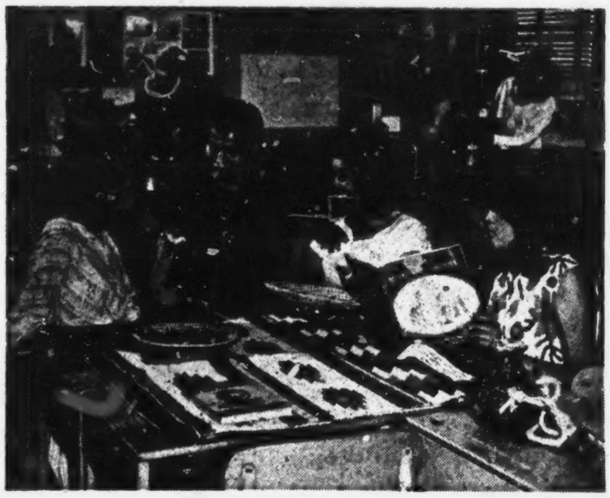
It lies beneath the purple arches
of the sunset sky.

The singing of the wild birds,
the crying of the wild animals
ring through the air in this desert land.

The voices of the people,
the sound of the drums and the rattles,
the tunes of the native songs
are heard around the camp fire
in the dark stillness of the night.

The mountains glow in the sunlight.

The lazy Gila River creeps slyly by
on this ancient war ground of the Apache
where the Aw-aw-tam now live in peace.



DONALD J. MORROW

*In anticipation of their return to the Navajo Reservation, ninth graders of Intermountain School, Brigham City, Utah, examine artifacts used during "The Long Walk."*

That poetry was written by an Indian student who learned English as his second language. When a teacher has succeeded to this degree with a student who is expressing his feelings in his second language, she has every right to be proud of her achievement.

Certain aspects of reservation life, especially in the economic sector, no longer adequately serve Indians. Consequently, like the rest of us, except to a far greater degree, Indians must make rapid adjustments—complex adjustments—adjustments often confusing to them. They are faced with learning different ways of living, and different ways of making a living, so that they can catch up and keep up with the demands of the twentieth century. A good command of English, more so than ever before, is a key tool to their successful transition to twentieth-century living. Educational programs in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools at all grade levels place heavy emphasis on both English language teaching and curriculum content related to newer ways of living. This paper deals with English language teaching.

Indian children who come from Indian homes where the English language is spoken have language problems very much like the problems of other American children. An Indian child who grows up learning and speaking English at home enters school at six years of age with six years of exposure to English. Some experts say the average six year old has acquired 50 percent of his language development by the time he enters school. At any rate, regardless of his level, the school can begin at whatever point his language development happens to be when he starts his school career and develop it to higher levels year by year. For

DONALD J. MORROW

*Second graders at Jemez Day School, Jemez, New Mexico.*

English-speaking Indian children, English development at school, in turn, is supported and strengthened by English usage at home.

The child who comes from an Indian home where no English is spoken is in quite a different situation. He sheds his six years of language development in his native tongue at the school door, and begins his school career deaf and mute to the language of the classroom. His ears, although physically receptive to sound, cannot associate English sounds meaningfully with any thing in his Indian language background. He possesses a sound code for his native language, but his language code unlocks no meaning when applied to English. Until he can learn the English code, he is unable to comprehend the message the code carries. He is faced not only with learning a new language, English, but also a new culture, the culture of the classroom. This is an extremely heavy learning load for a six-year-old child. By comparison with English-speaking children, he starts his school career six years behind in English language development. His home gives him no support in learning English since English is never spoken in his home. This describes for you the nature of our problems in teaching English because relatively few of the Indian children in the Bureau's school system speak any English at all when they enter school.

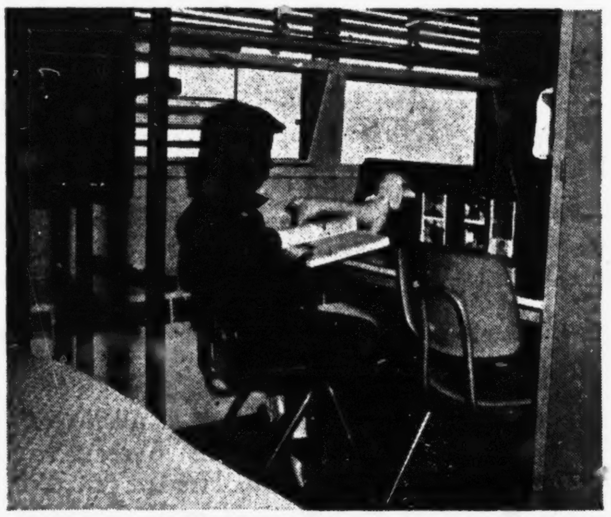
HILDEGARD THOMPSON
*Sixth grade Wahpeton Indian students use a listening center in Brigham City, Utah.*

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, in its 100 years of working with the English language problem, has evolved methods on the basis of what will work and what will not work, but the Bureau does not claim to have all of the answers. There is a continual search for new and better methods, and in this search the Bureau encourages experimentation. However, experimentation so far has affirmed, rather than negated, the basic principles and premises on which the Bureau's English language program for the early elementary grades has evolved. These fundamentals are:

> 1. The development of spoken English precedes the development of English reading and writing skills. The Bureau sets aside the first year of school for the development of oral English, and oral English is emphasized throughout the grades. Teachers who implement this principle with understanding have better success when later they teach the reading and writing of English.
>
> 2. Spoken English in the early elementary grades should be developed in association with classroom, home, and community experiences. This practice recognizes that language learning accrues from experience, and in the beginning from concrete experiences.
>
> 3. Experiences provide the meaning content of language. Oral English expression should be welded to meaning since expression and meaning are inseparable in the communication of thought. Drill is important to establish English patterns of expression, but pattern drill is introduced in close association with meaning.

Oral language development requires that the individual learn to recognize and to produce the complete sound system of English, to make the correct association between meaning and expression, and to make English patterns of expression a matter of habit. The learner acquires ability to speak

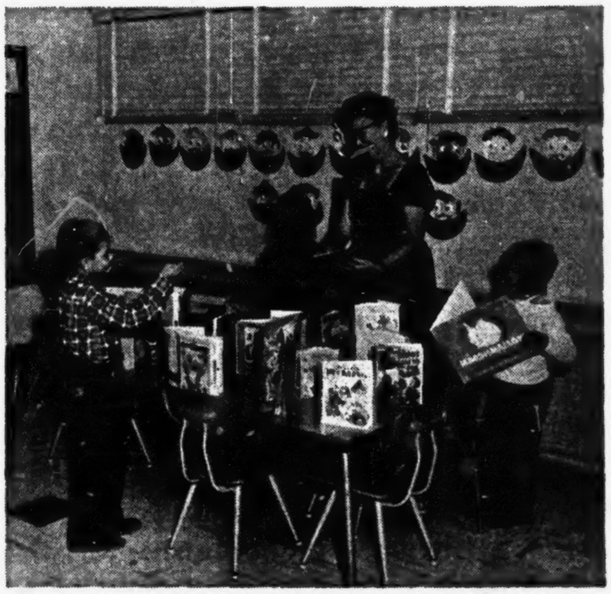
English by imitating English-speaking models. His ear must be taught to hear and distinguish English sounds (aural training); his speech muscles must be trained to produce the sounds in proper patterns of expressions (oral training), in terms of the meaning he wishes to express (cultural content).



*Studying dormitory room, Flagstaff Dormitory, Arizona.*

We bring into our system over 200 teachers each year. Few have had any training or experience in dealing with the type of language teaching problems we face. In our teacher orientation programs we try to give teachers entering the system some degree of undertsanding of the problems of a non-English-speaking child through role playing in a simulated beginners' classroom. The new teachers take the role of children and an Indian-speaking teacher conducts the class activities in one of the more than 150 Indian languages or dialects spoken today. Naturally the new employees understand nothing. As they try to guess at the instructions the native-speaking teacher gives, and fail, she repeats the instructions in louder and louder tones—a common error made by teachers when children fail to comprehend their instructions in the new language. About 30 minutes of this type of experience puts the teachers in an understanding mood for observation in demonstration classes conducted by experienced teachers working with little children in actual classroom situations.

We try to provide teachers with the space, equipment, and teaching tools to work with beginners. All of the classrooms in our new schools for beginners are spacious, contain movable tables and chairs, bulletin boards, a record player or a piano, or both, a slide projector, and movable charts. Each beginner's room has a small washroom with facilities scaled to child size.



*Mrs. Frances Longwood, teacher, assisting boy with his selection from library table at Cheyenne Eagle Butte School, South Dakota.*

We also expect our teachers to create an active classroom environment through the use of a great variety of materials of interest to primary-grade children such as toys, blocks, art materials, and natural science materials. Songs and games are an important part of the daily activities. Activities developed with these teaching materials provide interesting experiences that give meaningful content to the oral English that is being learned.

The experienced demonstration teacher shows the new recruits how to use these materials to develop English. After teachers are assigned to their own classrooms for regular teaching duties we ask them to evaluate their own performance by keeping before themselves questions such as these:

> Am I relating my oral English teaching to firsthand experiences?
>
> Do I make use of the everyday things children do at school?
>
> Do I provide children with a wealth of experiences to enrich their background?
>
> Do I use these experiences as the basis of my English language development?
>
> Do I help children hear English sounds correctly? (This calls for many listening activities.)
>
> Do I show them how English sounds are produced?
>
> Do I provide the practice they need to produce English thought patterns correctly?

We provide one whole year of this type of oral English instruction to give Indian children in our system a start for the first-grade work. This places them, in age, one whole year behind their English counterparts in first grade, but their achievement parallels that of English-speaking children until English becomes the primary tool for further learning, usually about fourth grade. At this point they begin to fall behind, and the gap becomes progressively wider until by the time they reach the upper elementary and high school grades they are two to four grades behind national norms.

Inability to achieve at adequate levels in upper grades and high school is a serious problem, and one which seems to be generally true of all groups that do not speak English as their first language. Why does it happen? What can be done about it? We are asking ourselves:

> Have we failed to build a solid oral English base for upper-grade English?
>
> Have we introduced abstract learning too fast?
>
> Have we expected the oral English language development adequate for grades 1-4 to serve upper elementary and high school levels?
>
> Are we using teaching methods that are inadequate at these upper-grade levels?
>
> Do we provide sufficient opportunities at each grade level for oral English practice?
>
> Have we presented upper-grade and high school English in a hit or miss fashion, thus neglecting proper control and sequence?
>
> Have we tried to teach English at upper-grade and high school levels in the same way we teach English to native English speakers?
>
> What are we doing about achievement gap at upper-grade levels?

First, two years ago, we analyzed the principles upon which our English language program is based in comparison with linguistic approaches. This analysis indicated to us that the basic principles in our approach are sound in accordance with present day thinking of linguists on the subject.

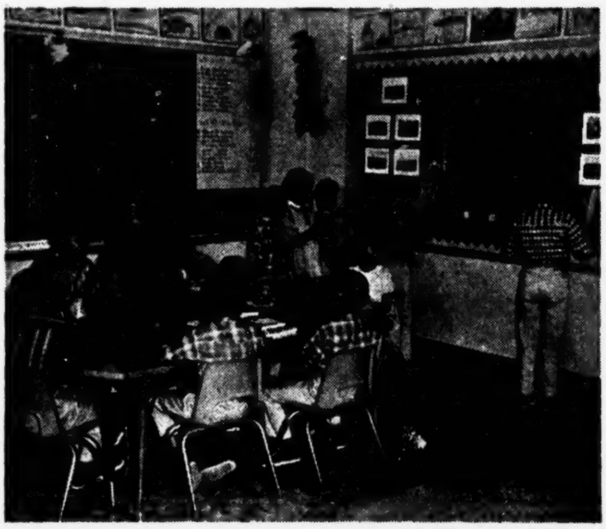
Second, we are working toward the development of an English language program laid out in sequential increments beginning with the primary grades on through high school grades. This is a monumental task which will take time, but we are convinced that it must be done. It is unfair to teachers to expect them to develop the level of English language capability required today without guides that indicate the oral language to be taught at each grade level.

Third, we have several groups experimenting with newer materials and experimental methods, but we are not abandoning our own approaches until we find better and more successful methods to replace them.

Fourth, we are developing drill materials to use at upper-grade levels and experimenting with them in a language laboratory at our largest boarding school. We have postponed putting language laboratories in other schools until we have first developed programs to use in them. We believe it is wise to invest our efforts first in the development of programs—with the investment in hardware to come later. We do, however, emphasize the use of tape recorders in every classroom.

Fifth, we are building libraries and material centers in all of our larger schools. These are to be learning centers equipped and stocked with all kinds of visual aids, as well as books and other reading materials. We expect these centers to be the heart of our schools.

Sixth, we are extending contacts of our students with non-Indians through field trips, excursions, exchange visits, and summer programs. These expanded experiences are providing at the upper-grade level the firsthand experiences that bring meaning to formal classroom work. If properly planned and used for their educational value, trips to museums, to concerts, to art galleries, to offices, to factories, and to governmental agencies broaden the cultural and educational horizons of upper-grade and high school students.



HILDEGARD THOMPSON

*Second-grade Taos Indian children arranging the bulletin board.*

One learns to meet people by meeting them. In many of our schools, students serve as guides to explain their school to visitors, and attend public meetings to tell about their school activities. Banking comes alive when students have seen the inside workings of a bank. In our schools the students operate a school bank as a safe place to keep their funds, as well as to provide experiences to develop the habit of saving. We use experiences such as these to provide content for English language learning.

DONALD J. MORROW

*Fourth-grade Navajo students having a reading lesson.*

We are coming face to face with the problem of English language teaching to a degree that we have never faced it before, for the simple reason that we are getting more students in high school, more students finishing high school, and more students going on to college and post high school training. As a matter of fact, by 1970 we hope to have 90 percent of Indian students in our schools finish high school, with all of them going on to training beyond the high school in colleges and universities, or technical and vocational schools. When we set this goal, only 52 percent of those who entered the 9th grade remained to graduate; thus, our most serious English failures were in the 48 percent who left us. In 1965, five years later, the holding power has been increased to 77 percent completing high school. Fifty percent of our high school graduates are continuing their education. These statistics indicate progress.

But we are not satisfied. We have much further to go. We hope to add experts to our staff to speed up the preparation of curriculum guides and English language materials of all kinds. We hope to employ a corps of specially prepared teachers, hopefully teachers with experience in teaching English as a second language, to work with students at all levels, to try out materials, and experiment with various approaches.

Perhaps what I've said will challenge teachers interested in this problem to seek employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In closing, may I again urge you to get better acquainted with your fellow citizens, the American Indians. Historically, Indians have contributed greatly to our way of life, but their contributions have lost much of their Indian identity. How many people in the corn belt, for example, know that Indians of the Americas gave us corn? How many of our statesmen and politicians know that the Six Nations of Iroquois had a highly organized form of government from which our Founding Fathers borrowed some of their ideas in developing the structure of our own government?

Indians have much to give America today. Indian culture—and only Indian culture—is indigenous to America. As such it can add a quality to the fabric of American life that is distinctive. We should not lose that distinctiveness; instead we should enhance it by helping each individual Indian develop his innate capacities to the fullest. By so doing, not only will American life be strengthened but we will demonstrate to the world how much we value the individual and his right to be himself.

ELDONNA L. EVERTTS

# Annotated Bibliography of Books for Elementary Children in English and Foreign Language Editions

The following bibliography is divided into three sections: books that have both an English and a foreign language edition; single volumes that are written in both English and a foreign language; picture dictionaries or books that are written in English with selected words, phrases, or passages written in a foreign language.

Teachers may use these books to help pupils maintain or improve an ability to read a foreign language or to acquaint pupils with the fact that many stories enjoyed in English-speaking countries bring equal pleasure to children in foreign countries. A pupil who is learning English as a second language can move from a story he can understand in his own language to seeing, hearing, and understanding the story in English. Many teachers may wish to use these books to illustrate variations between the syntax or the structure of one language and that of another.

Anglund, Joan Walsh. *A Friend Is Someone Who Likes You*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958.
The original English version of a reflection on the world of reality, as viewed through the eyes of a child.

______________ *Un Ami, C'est Quelqu'un Qui T'aime*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965.
The French translation of *A Friend Is Someone Who Likes You*; literal translation of text, with identical layout and illustrations.

Brown, Marcia. *Stone Soup: An Old Tale*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947.
An English version of the Old French tale, retold and illustrated by Marcia Brown.

______________. *Une Drole de Sôupe: Un Vieux Conte*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960.
The French translation of *Stone Soup*, with identical format and illustrations.

Lionni, Leo. *Swimmy*. New York: Random House, 1963.
The original English version of the adventures of a little black fish whose friends are all swallowed by a hungry tuna.

______________. *Nageot*. French translation by Catherine David. New York: Random House, 1963.
The French translation of *Swimmy*, with identical format and illustrations.

______________. *Suimi*. Spanish translation by Teresa A. de la Haba. New York: Random House, 1963.
The Spanish translation of *Swimmy*, with identical format and illustrations.

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Plenn, Doris Troutman. *The Green Song*. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. New York: David McKay Company, 1965.
The original English version of a fantasy story about a little Puerto Rican tree frog who takes a plane to New York City in his effort to see the world.

______________. *La Canción Verde*. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. Sharon, Connecticut: The Troutman Press, 1956.
The Spanish edition of *The Green Song*, arranged in different format and pagination but with identical illustrations.

Politi, Leo. *Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.
The English version of a Christmas story for children, telling about a small boy who lives in the Spanish sector of Los Angeles.

______________. *Pedro, el Ángel de la Calle Olvera*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.
The Spanish translation of *Pedro, the Angel of Olvero Street*, arranged in similar format and with identical illustrations. A Spanish-English glossary is appended.

Rey, H. A. *Curious George*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.
The original English version of the antics of a small African monkey when he first arrived in the United States.

______________. *Jorge el Curioso*. Translated by Pedro Villa Fernandez. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.
The Spanish translation of *Curious George*, with Spanish-English vocabulary printed at the bottom of each page and a Spanish-English glossary appended.

Robbins, Ruth. *The Emperor and the Drummer Boy*. Illustrated by Nicolas Sidjakov. Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press, 1962.
The English edition of a story describing a young drummer boy and his encounter with Napoleon.

______________. *L'empereur et le Tambour*. Illustrated by Nicolas Sidjakov. Translated by Marie Byrne. Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press, 1962.
A translation of *The Emperor and the Drummer Boy*, written in French with format and illustrations identical to the English edition.

Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *The Little Prince*. English translation by Katherine Woods. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1943.
The English translation of the original French fantasy describing a visitor from another planet. This edition is identical in format to that of the original French edition.

______________. *Le Petit Prince*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1943.
The original French story of *The Little Prince*.

Vacheron, Edith, and Virginia Kahl. *Here Is Henri!* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959.
Three short stories, written in English, about Henri, a French boy, and his cat friend, Michel.

______________. *Voici Henri!* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959.
The French edition of *Here Is Henry!* The format and illustrations are identical with a French-English glossary.

Vacheron, Edith, and Virginia Kahl. *More about Henri!* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.
An English sequel to *Here Is Henri!* Four additional stories about Henri are included in this one volume.

______________. *Encore Henri!* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.
The French edition of *More about Henri!*, with identical format and illustrations. A French-English glossary is appended.

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Baldner, Gaby. *Joba and the Wild Boar [Joba und das Wildschwein]*. Illustrations by Gerhard Oberlander. New York: Hastings House, 1961.

A story about a little German girl and a baby wild boar that becomes her pet. The text includes both English and German side-by-side on the page.

Barenbaum, Simon and Ruth. *Le Secret du Grand Hangar [The Secret of the Grand Hangar]*. Photographs by Edward Freeman. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966.

Large, black-and-white photographs illustrate the story of preparation for the French Carnival and the excitement of the festival itself. Captions are written in French, with the English translations given as an appendix.

François, André. *Crocodile Tears [Larmes de Crocodile]*. New York: Universe Books, 1963.

A nonsense story for young children, written in English with the French translation printed under the English.

Frasconi, Antonio. *The House that Jack Built [La Maison que Jacques Abatie]*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958.

A traditional nursery rhyme printed in both English and French, with the French text appearing directly below the English on each page. English questions about the poem, with the answers in French, are included at the end of the book.

Frasconi, Antonio. *The Snow and the Sun [La Nieve y el Sol]*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961.

An old South American folk rhyme with colored woodcut illustrations, printed side-by-side in English and Spanish.

Klein, Leonore. *Huit Enfants et un Bébé [Eight Children and One Baby]*. Illustrations by Michael Foreman. New York: Abelard-Schuman, Ltd., 1966.

A story of a large family and the events that take place when they try to solve the problem of over-crowded living quarters. The text is written in simple French with an English translation at the end of the book.

Pillet, Roger A. *Andre Francois Villeneuve*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1965.

A story in informal French using expressions appropriate to everyday conversation. The English translation is available in the back of the book.

Prieto, Marianna. *Ah Ucu and Itzo*. Illustrations by Lee Smith. New York: The John Day Company, 1964.

The story of a small Mayan Indian boy in eastern Mexico and the trouble that results when his pet mouse eats the food that has been left for the "Little People," who determine whether or not there will be a good harvest. The story is written in English, with the Spanish translation written at the bottom of each page. An English and Spanish vocabulary, with phonetic pronunciations, is included.

Prieto, Marianna. *A Kite for Carlos*. Illustrations by Lee Smith. New York: The John Day Company, 1966.

The story of a Spanish-American boy and the kite that his grandfather makes him for his birthday. The story is printed in English on the left- and in Spanish on the right-hand pages. Spanish and English phonetic pronunciation vocabularies are appended, as well as informational notes concerning Spanish culture.

Prieto, Marianna. *The Wise Rooster [El Gallo Sabio]*. Illustrated by Lee Smith. New York: The John Day Company, 1962.

The story of the night the animals talked is told in English and in Spanish, with the English version on the left-hand pages and the Spanish translation on the right.

Priolo, Pauline. *Bravo Marco!* Illustrated by Betty F. Peterson. Italian translation by Arnolfo B. Ferruolo. Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press, 1963.

A story about a little Italian boy and how he persuades a stubborn donkey to pull his new cart. The story is written in English, followed by an Italian translation on each page; an English-Italian vocabulary of useful expressions is appended.

Rider, Alex. *A la Ferme / At the Farm*. Illustrated by Paul Davis. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962.

A story of two children who spend the summer on a farm. The story is given in English on one page, with the French translation printed on the facing page.

An alphabetical English-French vocabulary and a pronunciation guide are appended.

Rider, Alex. *Chez Nous / At Our House*. Illustrated by Isadore Seltzer. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962.
A story about everyday happenings familiar to any little American or French child. The story is printed first in English and then, on the facing pages, in French. An English-French vocabulary and a guide to pronunciation are appended.

Ritchie, Barbara. *Ramon Makes a Trade*. Illustrated by Earl Thollander. Spanish translation by Kenneth Edwards. Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press, 1959.
The story of how Ramon, a Mexican boy, manages to buy a parakeet and cage through some skillful bargaining and trading. The English version is given at the top of each page, with the Spanish translation printed at the bottom. A glossary of useful expressions in English and Spanish is appended.

Ritchie, Barbara. *To Catch a Mongoose*. Illustrated by Earl Thollander. French translation by Marie Byrne. Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press, 1963.
A story of two Caribbean children who caught and tamed a mongoose and then tried to sell him. The story is written in English, with the French translation given at the bottom of each page.

Sokol, Camille. *La Pluche*. Illustrated by Bill Sokol. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1963.
Impressions about the everyday life of La Pluche, a lackadaisical father, is told in French, with the English translation given at the bottom of each page.

Steegmuller, Francis. *Le Hibou et la Poussiquette [The Owl and the Pussy-Cat]*. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961.
A free translation in French of Edward Lear's poem, "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat." A French-English glossary is appended, as well as the original English version of the poem.

Steegmuller, Francis, and Norbert Guterman. *Papillot, Clignot et Dodo [Wynken, Blynken and Nod]*. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. New York: Ariel Books, 1964.
A free French translation of Eugene Field's "Wynken, Blynken and Nod"; an English text is included at the end of the book.

Trez, Denise and Alain. *Le Petit Chien [The Little Dog]*. Illustrated by Alain Trez. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1961.
A French story about a little dog that was robbed of his bones by his nine brothers, yet who heroically saves his brothers. The English version begins with the back cover; thus both versions end in the middle of the book. The illustrations are identical for both versions.

Trez, Denise and Alain. *Le Vilain Cat [The Mischievous Cat]*. Illustrated by Alain Trez. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1965.
A French story of a cat who played naughty tricks on the other animals. The French text is presented at the beginning of the book with the English version under the back cover and reading toward the middle of the book. The illustrations are identical for both versions.

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Brunhoff, Laurent de. *Babar's French Lessons*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1963.
A story of an elephant teaching French to children. The story is told in English, with important or useful phrases given in French immediately following the English word or phrase.

Brunhoff, Laurent de. *Babar's Spanish Lessons*. Spanish words by Roberto Eyzaguirre. New York: Random House, Inc., 1965.
A story of an elephant teaching Spanish to children. The story is told in English, with important or useful phrases given in Spanish immediately following the English word or phrase.

Frasconi, Antonio. *See and Say: A Picture Book in Four Languages.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955.

A selection of familiar words, given in four languages: English, Italian, French, and Spanish. The words are illustrated with large, colorful woodcuts.

Frasconi, Antonio. *See Again, Say Again: A Picture Book in Four Languages.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964.

A sequel to *See and Say,* with familiar words listed in four languages and illustrated with large, colorful woodcuts.

Joslin, Sesyle. *Spaghetti for Breakfast.* Illustrated by Katharina Barry. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965.

An Italian vocabulary guide for children, with a common Italian phrase given on each page, followed by a pronunciation guide and the English translation. A picture is used on each page to demonstrate the time and place in which the phrase would be used.

Joslin, Sesyle. *There Is a Bull on My Balcony.* Illustrated by Katharina Barry. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966.

A Spanish vocabulary guide for children, with familiar phrases given in Spanish, accompanied on each page by a pronunciation guide, the English translation, and a picture to demonstrate the use of the word.

Joslin, Sesyle. *There Is a Dragon in My Bed.* Illustrated by Irene Haas. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961.

A French vocabulary guide for children. A common French phrase is given on each page, with pronunciation and the English translation given directly below. A picture demonstrates the time and place in which the phrase would be used.

Filloux, Odette, translator. *The Cat in the Hat Beginner Book Dictionary in French.* New York: Random House, Inc., 1965.

A dictionary for children learning French idiom, with large illustrations for English entry words. English and corresponding French sentences illustrate the use of each word. This book is based on the original Beginner Book Dictionary.

Shannon, Terry. *A Trip to Mexico.* Illustrated by Charles Payzant. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1961.

Two American children describe their recent trip to Mexico. Spanish vocabulary and useful phrases are given above the English text, along with punctuation guide and English translation for each word.

Shannon, Terry. *A Trip to Paris.* Illustrated by Charles Payzant. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1959.

A story about American children taking a trip to Paris. French phrases are given above the English text, along with a pronunciation guide and English translation of each phrase.

Shannon, Terry. *A Trip to Quebec.* Illustrated by Charles Payzant. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1963.

A story about American children taking a trip to Quebec. French phrases are given above the English text, along with a pronunciation guide and English translation of each phrase.

Steiner, Charlotte. *A Friend Is "Amie."* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956.

A story about two little girls who became friends in spite of the fact that they spoke different languages. The story is written in English, with the French girl's vocabulary included and indicated by a color key. French words with English equivalents are shown with large illustrations in the front and back of the book.